



T. Merr is Sulp.

Woodlands.

W.D.B. Inc.

Woodlands.

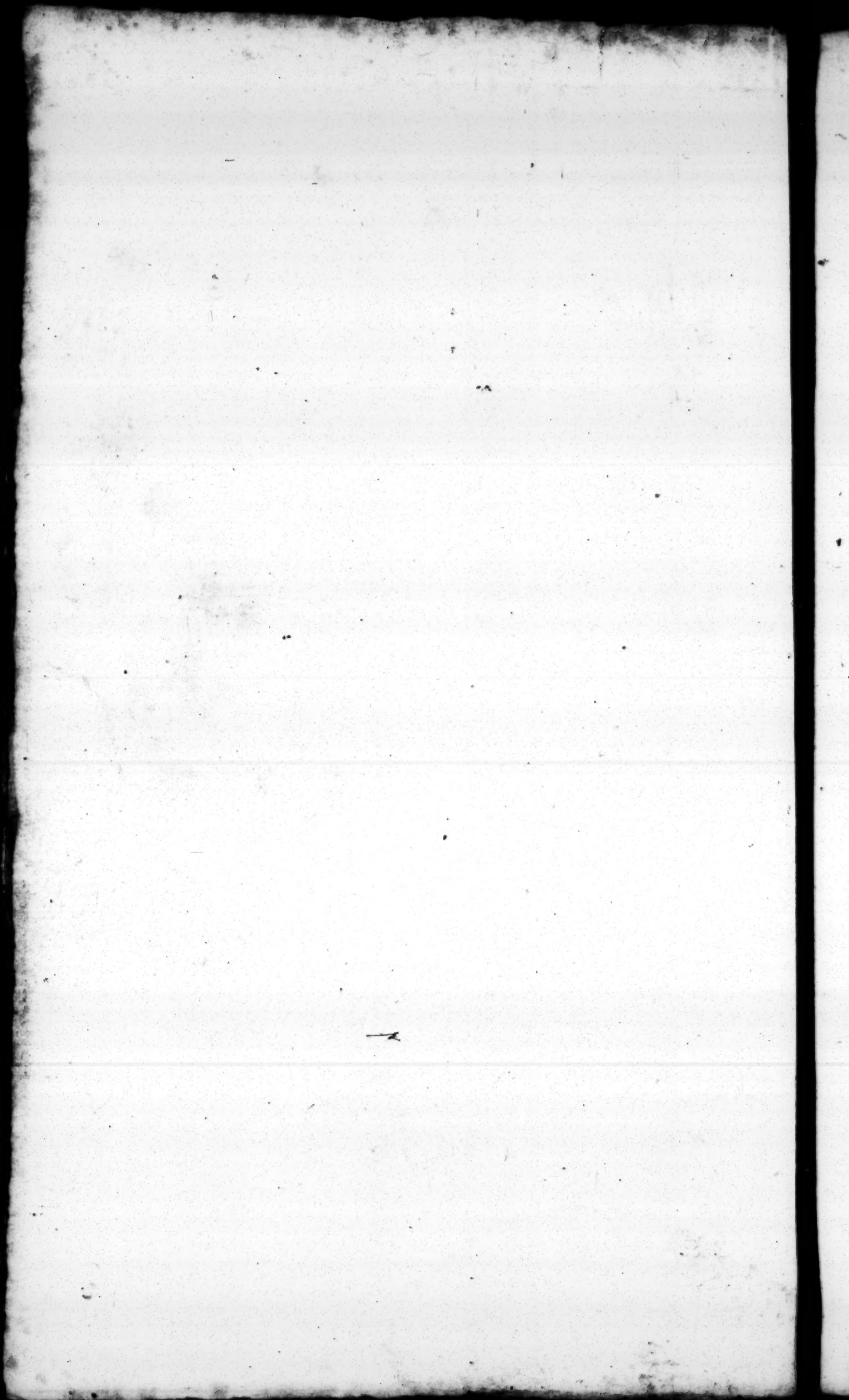
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Thornhill St.





MARY DE-CLIFFORD.

A STORY.

Interpersed with many POEMS.

Mihi parva rura, et
Spiritus Graiæ tenuem Camænæ
Parca non mendax dedit, et malignum
Spernere vulgus.
Hor. L. 11. Od. 16.

L O N D O N :

Printed for H. D. SYMONDS, Paternoster-Row.

M, DCC, XCII.

MARY DE-CLIFFORD

A 270 87

Interpreted with my former

Mr. Davis

Department of the Interior

First of the year of the year

Second of the year

Third of the year



P R E F A C E.

THE name of NOVEL has been applied to a species of composition, which has not only become numerous to an uncommon degree of satiety, but so ineffably contemptible, so much beneath all criticism, that the very Title is almost sufficient to damn a performance that uses it, among all people of literature and taste. Yet, though I do not wonder at this effect, it is not just. To attain excellence in such a work, requires powers of a very high kind; so high, that they appear to me to be only inferior to those of an epic poet. Did it not seem like paying court to the living, I would say that the Novels of Mrs. Smith, (whom I neither know, nor am in any remote way connected with,) are literary productions of a very superior nature. To

me they have given an exquisite pleasure, (undoubtedly increased by a peculiar congeniality of all those ideas I have been habituated to indulge), which I cannot express. But, (though I doubt not I shall be taxed with it,) I am not conscious to myself of having imitated her, since I have uniformly written the rapid and unstudied effusions of my own fancy.

Yet the generality of readers consider writings of this class high-flown, (as they term them), while they commend and peruse with avidity tales descriptive of more ordinary and daily life, which they call *natural*, as if nothing was natural that was not vulgar, or at least familiar. But portraits of this sort, even if they are faithful, which they seldom are, (any more than the face that is drawn by the sign-post dauber, is like the King or General whom he is attempting to represent on his board,) deserve but very inferior praise. In those moments of intellectual amusement, when it is removed from the
dull

P R E F A C E.

V

dull intercourse of common society, the elegant mind wishes to expatiate: it calls for works, which may elevate or refine; and it is the business of the Novellist of genius, like the Poet, not indeed to depart from nature in his descriptions, but to select his images and his circumstances; to extract the essence, and leave the dregs. All that is true, is not therefore worth telling. The popularity to be attained by lowering the ideas to the sympathy of ordinary minds, is to be rejected with scorn.

These are my sentiments ; how far my own production agrees with them, it is not my province to judge: nor would it be wise to enter by anticipation, into a quarrel with Critics, who must of course have the advantage of the last blow. Possibly I may be told, as I once was on an occasion of a different kind, that though my “ my imagination may be brilliant,” and I “ do not want poetical powers,” I am “ egregiously deficient in

judgment." It may be so: I have taken very little time for that slow faculty to operate, for I have written these sheets with a degree of rapidity, which the public would not think the better of me for telling them. I have not written for reputation; I have ventured no name; it has been an exquisite amusement to me, a delightful relaxation from dryer studies, to commit to paper, as carelessly as they rose, some of the thoughts that were playing about my fancy. Whatever faults there may be therefore, I think there cannot be those of affectation. As to the Poetry, with which this little Volume is pretty thickly sown, I never studied it, but frequently found it easier to express the ideas that were pressing on my mind in verse, than in prose; and then having once written down the lines that were intended to preserve my thoughts, I let them stand, without ever thinking any more about them. Thus I trust they are not unsimple.

Having

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Having said this, I shall, without further care, commit this little Book to its fate; almost certain, (though it is not at all likely to be popular), I shall meet with a congeniality in those minds, which I most wish to interest.

Kent,
Jan. 12, 1792.

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MARY DE-CLIFFORD.

THERE is an ancient mansion, though not large, situated in a rude old park, in a retired and romantic part of a county not far from the capital, which has belonged for three centuries, I think, to a branch of the family of DE CLIFFORD, a race that have shone with lustre in all our annals, ever since they assumed the name, which they took from the castle of CLIFFORD, in Herefordshire, soon after the Conquest.

The branch in question were founded by a younger brother, who having little more than his valour and his rank for his inheritance, purchased this seat with the spoils he won in the French wars in the time of Hen. V. From that date this particular

B

line

line have lived retired as country gentlemen, and by a series of prudent matches added to the estate acquired by their ancestor, so as hitherto to have shared pre-eminence among the commoners of their county. In this station they have not wanted their distinctions; they can shew the rooms in which they entertained Queen Elizabeth;—they possess the portraits of ancestors, who fought under Lord Vere in the Netherlands, and bled or died for Charles I; and of beauties, who emerging from the sweet retirement of their native place, shone in the luxurious Court of Charles II.

The last possessor of this place died a few years ago, leaving a widow of a descent less honourable than the alliances his ancestors had hitherto made, (though perhaps a prudent match, for she had a good fortune, and was of a family at that time much richer than his own,) and two children, a son and daughter.

The



The son was some years older than the daughter. He was a pleasing young man, of a gentle and affectionate disposition, and very good abilities, which, after having cultivated with all the store of classical and polite literature, he had particularly employed in the study of the history and arts of his own country. This in conjunction with the early impressions he had received from the conversation of his father, made him excessively fond, and perhaps a little vain, of his own family, though not to the disparagement of others, for the same imagination, the same love of the lustre of past ages, which made him reverence the house of DE-CLIFFORD, induced him to feel peculiar respect for whatever was distinguished by hereditary honor. This subject, which possibly engrossed rather too much of his conversation, was disagreeable to his mother, whose understanding and habits of thinking were of a different species, and though nobody was more devoted than herself, to those whom she esteemed people of consequence, yet she treated the sentiments of her son,

(fond as she was of him) sometimes with raillery, and sometimes with contempt: for she thought they governed too much his actions, and that he despised people of whose society he ought to be proud, and disdained alliances she esteemed highly advantageous for him. She considered fortune the test of fashion, and had no other ideas of family importance, than having for the last twenty years enjoyed the greatest affluence. Her son, dutiful and affectionate, dissented from his mother without lessening his love for her.

MARY DE-CLIFFORD, (for that was the daughter's name,) had been the little darling of her father, and grew up with an high respect and duty towards her mother; but there was nothing by nature congenial in their minds. Both the children seemed to inherit their father's disposition, and understanding. The affection between the brother and sister was excessive.

Mary, to all the sensibility and taste of her brother, still softened by her sex, had something

something still more romantic in her turn; and tender and docile as she was, caught all the enthusiasm of his sentiments, which were ever floating in her mind and gaining fresh force there, though they broke not out in her expressions: for she was a silent listener, and rather assented by her countenance, which was all intelligence, than by her lips.

She had passed her childhood in the romantic residence of her ancestors, under the eye of her mother, and beloved brother, without mixing with the world, or even enjoying the familiarity of any female of her own age, of whom there happened to be none that the family visited within a convenient distance. Her mind and sentiments therefore, naturally in the highest degree delicate, were purity itself. No books but the most elegant and refined had fallen in her way. The most polite moralists, and the best poets were selected from the heterogeneous mass, that were kept constantly locked up in the cases of the fine old library, and

placed on the shelves of her little dressing room, by the hands of her brother. With a mind thus formed, and educated, she had completed her sixteenth year with a degree of enjoyment such as human life has seldom furnished. All the scenery around her was in unison with her feelings. The variety of the seasons; the interchange of wood, hill, and valley; the distant prospect, and the sequestered glen, had all contributed a thousand times to her delights. She was constant in her morning, and her evening walks—and she could wander secure within the protection of the rude old park, which afforded her all the variety she could want. From its hills she could command the richest and most distant prospects; and there were some parts so retired, as to appear almost untrod by human feet. What numberless hours would she sit, with some divine poem in her hand, under a tree, from whence she could command, over the thick villages, the clustered towers of the distant city, blue and indistinct, and backed by the purple mountains that seemed to mix with the clouds! There would

would she enjoy the fresh air of heaven, that blew upon her face and bosom, and added to the exquisite tones of her frame! These seemed almost moments of inspiration! She was all soul:

“ Ten thousand heavenly fancies fill'd her mind,
“ Ten thousand glorious visions would she build,
“ But with the clouds they fled, and left no track
behind.”

When her brother was at home, she had from a very early age loved to wander out with him, and hear his conversation, and be supported by his arm. She would listen with rapture, as he pointed to the spots where their ancestors won renown in the chase, and told the history of the large horns, that hang in the hall: and would patiently for hours trace out with him the scite of the lake and the pavilions, that were formed for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth and her Court, two hundred years ago. She heard with some regret of those days of chivalry and romantic honor, and perhaps for a moment loved to fancy herself at tilts and tournaments

naments raining influence with her eyes
upon some bold and favoured knight.

Her brother accustomed to the more refined society of London, where alone a concentration of genius and literature is to be found, mixed but little with his few neighbours in the country. But amongst those, who by accident, rather than choice, was one of the companions of his childhood was Sir PETER LUMM, a neighbour of large fortune, whose family he despised, whose riches he sneered at, and whose insipidity of character he treated with the most careless indifference. The truth is, that his father, who was a rich Woollen-draper in a shop, which he had raised from nothing by his own industry, as it was said, and partly perhaps by his villainy, had in the latter part of life been created a Baronet, and bought a

- * “ Where throngs of Knights, and Barons bold.
- “ In weeds of Peace high triumphs hold,
- “ With store of Ladies, whose bright eyes
- “ Rain influence, and judge the prize.”

Milton's L' Allegro.

large

large estate, near the seat of the Cliffords, and all the land around it that could be got either by arts or money, and pulling down the ancient mansion, in which he could not brook the numerous traces of former ages, built in its place, a most enormous mass of red brick, with wings and colonnades, and pillars, and flights of steps, large and shewy enough to form a modern hospital. Here with the splendor of his rooms, the pomp of his carriages, and servants, and the insolence of his wife and daughters, he hoped to dazzle and overawe the neighbourhood. But all availed but little to keep up his spirits, that soon drooped from the vacancy of that bustle and noise in which he had spent all his life; and he lived but a little while after his retirement. He left a widow more haughty, more ignorant, and more unpollished than himself, and several children, some of whom were now settled in various ways, and his eldest son Sir Peter Lumm, who has been already mentioned, in possession of the inheritance.

Sir

Sir Peter in the opinion of some would not have been thought disagreeable. He was rather tall, but fat, with a face large, round, florid and good-humoured. There were many, who called him uncommonly handsome. He had formerly, as the play-fellow of De-Clifford, spent much time at WOODLANDS, (for that was the name of the Clifford seat,) and he still continued his intercourse here. Often had he sat at table with MARY, and often had he met her in her wanderings, but she was a child and engaged not his attention. To her his coming and his going had been indifferent, had it not affected the loss or the possession of her brother's conversation.

MARY was now at a most critical age, and De-Clifford watched over her affections, and even her looks, with the most scrupulous attention. Yet he could discern nothing in her behaviour towards Sir Peter, but of the most perfect indifference. Mrs. De-Clifford did not observe her daughter with less watchfulness. But while Sir Peter was talking of his

his horses, his dogs, and his betts, MARY sat lost in musings, or stole out of the room to her favourite haunts; Mrs. De-Clifford seemed delighted with his carelessness and ease, and the fashionable cant of his language, and her son, who had always looked upon him as a cypher, sometimes, (as it was his own house,) listened with apparent attention, though in truth he was wrapt up in his own thoughts, and sometimes led him on to greater absurdities in talking, till the laugh of perfect contempt that broke forth, was interpreted as the involuntary tribute of admiration.

Yet he saw with some concern that Sir Peter grew less inoffensive in his character than formerly; that he became proud, talked more of his riches, ran deeper into the fashionable follies, and piqued himself upon them, and though himself from the superiority of his personal qualifications had hitherto kept him in awe, yet that even to him he began to assume an importance not perfectly agreeable. De-Clifford's friends also
with

with whom he frequently associated (from a school-intimacy originating from neighbourhood,) began to perceive something of this alteration. They generally met for a fortnight in October at Woodlands—This year there was Hungerford, Bromley, Woodvile, Berney, and Taylor, besides Sir Peter, and De Clifford.

Hungerford was a younger son of Lord Heytesbury, without much fortune, and without a profession. He had a good understanding, more remarkable for its judgment, than its brilliancy, an excellent heart, and tolerable person. His polished manners, and placid temper, rendered him beloved, wherever he went.

Bromley, with a competent fortune (being one of the sons of an eminent Barrister) was intended for his father's profession, in which he was likely to make a considerable figure, if the eccentricity of his temper would allow him to give sufficient application to it. But his talents for conviviality,
his

his lively wit, and love of the pleasures of the table, made his friends often tremble for his success. His disposition and temper were naturally good, but the loose rein he gave to his passions, made him but little to be relied upon.

Woodvile, a man of the most illustrious descent, in possession of a most magnificent old seat, which the decayed fortune of his family was but ill able to support, was a character yet more eccentric than the last. His brilliant fancy, his talents for polite literature, his heart filled with the sublimest principles, yet irregular, his temper a mixture of gaiety and melancholy, added to a person tall and elegant, yet somewhat neglected, and a countenance full of intelligence, formed a character that according to the difference of people's tastes, was beloved, hated, or despised.

Berney was the eldest son of a country gentleman of a neighbouring county, with a good estate; and though he did not want

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under-

understanding, was, through pure attachment, and not affectation, totally devoted to hunting, and the sports of the country. He was rather short and stout, with an handsome face, and was possessed of such cheerfulness and good-nature, with some degree of humour, as made his friends love his society.

Taylor, who had lately entered into orders, perhaps had the least natural abilities of the whole set, except Sir Peter, and was born with an asperity of temper;—but the latter he had corrected, and the former cultivated with such assiduous care, as rendered him the most regularly informed among them. His principles were unquestioned, and, on whatever emergency, his friends always trusted to his activity, the rectitude of his heart, and the depth of his judgment.

Though all these were friends of De-Clifford, I cannot say they were all cordial to each other. Something disagreeable had several times passed between Bromley and Sir Peter,

Peter, with whom Taylor too had once or twice remonstrated a little severely about some points of his behaviour; and now Woodvile also, impressed with a general idea of the lustre of his family, (though he was no minute genealogist) had, upon some airs shewn by Sir Peter, treated him with such pointed raillery and contempt, as raised serious apprehensions for the consequences in De-Clifford, and his mother.

MARY had been kept with religious care from mixing at improper times with this set; and though they had hitherto looked on her as a child, yet such was De-Clifford's love of his sister, and such the command he had over his companions, that no syllable of impurity was ever uttered in her presence.

Often as she had met them sauntering in the park, she neither sought, nor avoided them. But sometimes went on with the book that she had been reading, and sometimes accompanied them in their strolls. Bromley indeed found her on a bench one
C 2 day

day reading Thomson's Seasons, and rallied her on her taste, and told her that very soon the gaiety of dances and assemblies would put all the scenery, in which she delighted, out of her head. But she began to deny it very seriously, upon which seizing her hand and kissing it, he replied with some lively raillery, to which she could find no answer. She was a little angry at first; but as it appeared to be one of those fallies of liveliness, which were ever uppermost in his character, she thought no more about it.

Bromley however felt a sensation through his frame, which, recollecting the character of himself and De-Clifford, he soon suppressed.

It was often usual, of mornings, (when Sir Peter, and Berney were hunting, and Bromley out with his gun,) for Hungerford, Woodvile, Taylor, and De-Clifford, to wander all the morning either in low carriages, or on foot about the park, and sometimes MARY was invited to be one of the party. Hungerford,

ford, whose ease and good humour often placed him in the most enviable situations, was sometimes permitted to drive her, and by this means she was carried to those more distant parts of the park, which were beyond her walks. With him of all her brother's companions, she felt herself most easy. There was a quietness about him, that suffered her to enjoy uninterrupted the scenery and the sentiments in which she took such delight. She considered him as a brother, and with all the purity of an angel, felt no fear in being alone in the deepest woods with him. Along these unfrequented paths she loved to see the fallen leaves whirled by the wind about her, and was delighted with the fragrance that rose from under the wheels as they pressed the matted heaps. Then issuing from the close alleys of interwoven wood, into light, and bursting upon the cheerful village below, and the deep valley that continued winding up in front of her, till it was bounded by the amphitheatre of wood that was terminated with the horizon, she was almost in extacy with the scenery. Hunger-

ford proud of his charge, assented with the utmost civility to the broken exclamations of rapture she continually expressed, and drove on. For to own the truth, his fancy was of a tamer sort.

One day when they were in one of the thickest and most unfrequented drives of the farthest wood in the park, a rustling was heard all at once among the boughs, and there appeared Sir Peter Lumm, returning from the chase. He instantly stopped his horse; MARY seemed frightened, for she first turned pale, and then blushed; some conversation ensued, and Sir Peter appeared more anxious than he usually was, to keep it up. Indeed she looked at that moment peculiarly beautiful. Her fair complexion had got from the air an uncommon glow—her light auburn hair was blown in graceful negligence about her face; and the wind, perhaps rather too boldly, shewed the exquisite whiteness of her neck, and the uncommon slenderness of her ankle.

The

The party met in the large old dining room ; in the recess of which the windows are so full of painted glass, that it was very soon necessary to have candles. This, De-Clifford, and Woodvile particularly regretted, for they loved as they sat at table to look over the deep fall of the grounds from the house, which fronts the West, and see the sun gradually sink behind the tawny woods on the high ground at the top of the park. MARY's eyes were several times glanced that way, before the lights were brought : Sir Peter Lumm was particularly talkative and insolent ; he boasted of his riches, and of the fashionable clubs to which he belonged, and affected to be the very essence of fashion : Mrs. De-Clifford was in uncommon spirits ; Woodvile now and then spoke a few sharp words ; Bromley enjoyed the absurdity, and by raillery that few but Sir Peter could have misunderstood, kept the rest of the company in some degree of good humour—while De-Clifford sometimes seemed lost in contemplating the fine old portraits that hung round the room, and sometimes by an half-sneer, yet

yet softened by his politeness, gave some vent to his indignation. The ladies were retired, and De-Clifford by some accident absent from the room, when Sir Peter began to rally Hungerford on his morning employment. "Do you know, Woodvile," said he, "I surprized him with little MARY in the very deepest part of the West-wood this morning, on the very spot where I met you with her last year, when I laughed at you so, for talking to such a child." Woodvile coloured, Hungerford looked grave, and before any thing farther could pass, De-Clifford entered the room. However the evening did not pass without some discord, though MARY's name, that now for the first time was mentioned even with the slightest jest, was never again uttered.

Woodvile, however, scrupulously delicate in the respect due to De-Clifford, and his family, rose the next morning uneasy; he had been accustomed to consider MARY as a beautiful plaything, and as she grew older, had been delighted with her taste and sensibility,

bility ; and had occasionally wandered about the park with her, fond of her remarks upon the scenes about her. On the other hand, she catching her brother's sentiments, had considered him as a Being of a superior order, and, though she loved to listen to the enthusiasm and loftiness of his conversation, felt an awe in his company, which made her often prefer the ease she enjoyed in the society of Hungerford. Yet she looked back upon many of the hours of her childhood passed with Woodvile, as of scenes almost spent in fairy-land : she considered him as her brother ; as the former of her taste, and never forgot the spots, in which she had listened to his reading or his conversation.

There was something therefore insolent in Sir Peter's remark, aided as it was by the significance of his manner. However, upon consideration, Woodvile thought the matter too trifling to disturb the peace of such a society, and upon entering the breakfast-room, and catching the countenance of MARY, felt that the angelic innocence of her looks would
awe

awe the most savage brute into respect, and be a sufficient rebuke to Sir Peter.

“ Miss De-Clifford,” said Sir Peter, “ as Hungerford attended you yesterday, it is my turn now. Will you suffer me to drive you out this morning?” “ Certainly Mary will,” said Mrs. De-Clifford—Mary glanced her eyes at her brother. He was silent. The chair was brought to the door, and Mary stepped in—“ And you will permit me to be your footman,” said Berney, good humouredly—Mary bowed and thanked him, with a smile—Sir Peter looked grave, and asked if she was afraid to trust herself alone with him. “ No,” said she, with a laugh, “ I am sure you will neither rob nor murder me, and as a coachman, you tell me you are the best in England. Why therefore should I be afraid?” They set out, and Sir Peter, entertaining her as he went with stories of himself, his hounds, servants, and horses, carried her to the only ugly parts of the park, that he might take an opportunity of shewing her a point of view from whence could
be

be seen his own seat, a vast pile standing upon a bleak open hill, from whence all the old trees that ever were there, had been cut down in order to make it more conspicuous. Sir Peter could not conceive but she must be struck with admiration at its splendor, after the rudeness, old fashion, and antiquity of the place, from whence she surveyed it: but Mary was overcome by his conversation, and knew not how to bear it. His vanity would have furnished a fund for the humour of Berny, who however had soon left them, having heard some hounds in full cry soon after they had departed from the house. Mary fatigued with his uninterrupted talking, to make herself some amends, proposed a more favorite way home. Her companion at the upper corner of a coppice, that runs along one of the highest hills, had stopped the carriage to catch another view of his own seat and grounds, when, as his attention was totally engrossed by it, Mary, awake to every rural sight and sound, heard a plaintive voice not very distant, without being able to distinguish

tinguish any complete sentences. At length she could perceive these words,

'Twas here, e'en here that I have heard
The voice divine of angels speak,
And heavenly visitants preferr'd
To me their airy thoughts to break;
But ah! my moody fancy strays.—
—————

After which there was a rustling noise among the boughs, but the voice was silent. She felt a mixture of awe and pleasure; and as she was perfectly acquainted with all the finest passages of the best poets, and almost realized in her own mind their airy images, those sublime lines in the *Paradise Lost* immediately occurred to her.

“ Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both night and day: how often from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air
Sole, or responsive to each other's note
Singing their great Creator: oft in bands

Where

While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number join'd, their songs -
Divide the night, and lift our souls to heaven."*

For the rest of the way home Sir Peter's attempts to gain Mary's attention to his conversation were fruitless: she was totally absorbed in her own thoughts; till Woodvile, who seemed returning from a walk, met them just before they arrived at the house, and was ready at the door to hand her from the carriage.

De-Clifford now began to perceive an alteration in the behaviour of some of his friends to his sister, whom they had hitherto treated as a child, at which, though he could not be surprized, he was rather thoughtful. Mary however seemed totally unconscious of it, though she was sometimes tired of the talkativeness, that interrupted her too much in her own thoughts and amusements. Yet with Hungerford she felt her-

* B. IV. V. 677—688.

self easy as ever ; though his heart seemed in some danger from the playful familiarity, with which she treated him ; but she was a little deprest by the gravity of Taylor, and overcome with the boisterous wit of Bromley ; by Berney she felt herself sometimes entertained and sometimes teased ; but Sir Peter was become almost insufferable, and Woodvile, to whom she used to delight to listen, seemed grown so melancholy and silent, and shewed such a personal contempt of Sir Peter, and such an antipathy to his family, (which probably was increased by the mortifying circumstance of the latter being in possession of some of the old Woodvile estates, owing to his father's necessities ;) that the society of both gave her some pain. She sat next Woodvile at dinner to-day, and endeavoured to draw him into conversation, for she could not bear to see those whom she had been accustomed to respect, unhappy, and longed again to hear some of those sallies, which, though they were not frequent, filled the imagination with their splendor, and affected the heart with their sublimity. He expressed

expressed such a lofty contempt of the ordinary-intercourse of society, and such a strong disgust at many of the follies of the world, as made Mary feel double delight in her own situation. Yet Mrs. De-Clifford could scarce refrain betraying her dislike to him; and Mary received grave looks from her, for the attention she was paying him. But he seemed so lost, and returned her civilities so slightly, that Mary could not help seizing his hand with ingenuous innocence, and asking if she had disoblged him, to which he replied very earnestly with a benignant smile, but apparent agitation, "Never." De-Clifford looked, (for Woodvile was the favourite of all his friends,) and seemed pleased: Mary glanced her eyes at her brother, and was delighted. The ladies left them, and soon after the party adjourned. Mrs. De-Clifford sent her daughter into the dining-room, to look for something she had dropped, and there she picked up a scrap of paper, with the following lines written hastily in pencil.

The heavenly gleams of autumn shine,
And touch the withering groves with gold;
To babbling hounds, and straying kine,
The yellow fields their gates unfold.

Chill morns, and evenings closing soon,
The symptoms of the fading year,
To me, now changing as the moon,
Had been methought for ever dear!

But why this boding at my breast,
Of future and mysterious grief?
These scenes could calm all pains to rest,
But now they give me no relief.

'Twas here, e'en here, that I have heard,
The voice divine of angels speak,
And heavenly visitants preferr'd
To me their airy thoughts to break!

But ah! my moody fancy strays.—
—— ——— ——— ———

Fond as Mary was of poetry, she was delighted when she began to read these lines, but when she came to the last stanza, in which she recognized the plaintive notes she had heard in the morning, she was full of surprize and indistinct curiosity. It was evidently

dently the production of one of the gentlemen in the house; and from the hand and style, it seemed improbable to be any other than Woodvile; yet what it could allude to, though it seemed in consonance with the melancholy humour he had lately been in, she could not guess. Yet she felt an unaccountable degree of reserve concerning it, which prevented her from consulting any body about it, and even hinting at it to Woodvile himself.

While most of the party were engaged at cards, De-Clifford and his sister, stole out to take a saunter down the avenue by moonlight. The evening was uncommonly clear, and the shadows of the towers and pinnacles upon the lawns had a very beautiful effect. She was listening to his favourite conversation, in which he was describing with great elegance and enthusiasm some of the past events of the spot where they were, when Woodvile started from a bench under one of the trees, and joined them. "Woodvile," said De-Clifford, "you seem unwell."—

D 3

"Indeed,"

“Indeed,” said Mary, “indeed, brother, he is;—feel his hand, how feverish it is!”—
“A walk by moonlight like this,” continued her brother, “used to put to flight any uneasiness.” “Yes,” said Mary, with what rapture, as I have walked with you along this grove, have I seen you watch, and with what eloquence have I heard you describe, the moon’s progress along the sky; but now you are all silence, and am I grown so stupid, as no longer to be worthy to be talked to?” “No, my sweet girl,” replied Woodvile, (tremblingly) “De-Clifford and you are the dearest friends I have on earth—I hope I am not such a brute, as to be insensible to the approbation of Mary De-Clifford.” The light of the moon was fortunately too dim to betray Mary’s blushes; and they all returned to the card-party. De-Clifford felt uneasy for Woodvile, and the first opportunity questioned him about the derangements of his affairs, of which he had a strong suspicion that he had lately received a letter from his steward at Grafton, the family-seat. Mrs. De Clifford when they entered

tered the room, was engaged in earnest conversation with Taylor; and Sir Peter, Berney, Hungerford, and Bromley, being at pretty deep play, were so engrossed, that they scarce observed their return. Mary therefore retired to her own room, and though she was sorry for the illness of Woodvile, felt a sensation of uncommon happiness, as she sat at her window musing, and looking at the long shadows of the trees, and the herds that were grazing in the park by moonlight; and her ideas for the first time in her life cloathing themselves in verse, broke forth in the following

S O N N E T.

O thou fair Moon, that o'er these fairy hills
Castest thy silver radiance, while the dew
On every blade her pearly drops distills,
And all delighted feed the fleecy crew!
Sure heavenly spirits often love to hail
Thy rising rays, and haunt thy shadowy light,
And frequent as thou stoop'st beneath the veil
Of yonder clouds, repeat the mystic rite!
At such an hour as this, methinks I hear
Ærial voices whisper to mine ear,

And

And thrill with inexpressive joy my frame!
With thee, sweet Beam, oh! ever mayst thou bring
Such lovely peace, such joy without a sting,
And lift my soul to so divine a flame!

When she had committed this to paper, and locked it up in her cabinet, she returned to the party, but the state of her mind so ill accorded with the language of a card table, that she felt disgusted, and retiring to a window of the room, seized a book that lay there, and turning her eyes again upon the park scenery, and the great West-wood, illuminated by her favourite light, recovered the harmony of her frame, that had been for a moment disconcerted.—Woodvile who had now placed himself by her, seemed by the energy and elegance of his remarks upon the scenes they were contemplating, to have in part recovered his chagrin, and Mary delighted with the fire and poetical fancy of his language, listened with eager attention. But they were soon interrupted by a summons to supper.

Sir

Sir Peter, who had lost a considerable sum of money, by his imprudent bets, came down fullen, and haughty. Bromley did not appear pleased—and Hungerford, too generous to be insolent at his success, attempted to revive good-humour, by his most easy and unassuming attentions. He sat by Mary, whose countenance even more intelligent than usual, seemed

Form'd to engage all eyes, and fix all hearts.

Sir Peter's looks brightened up, as far as it was possible for them, and often glanced with eyes of admiration towards her. -But she, unconscious of her charms, appeared oppressed by the notice she received, and soon stole away to her own apartment;—at which Mrs. De-Clifford seemed vexed; Sir Peter's vanity was piqued; and the rest of the party appearing to be all disappointed, the circle soon broke up.

The next day the whole party of gentlemen were to rise early for fox-hunting. The
hounds

hounds were to throw off at fix in the morning near HAWLEY, (Sir Peter's house.)--When they set off, there was a drizzling mist which covered the tops of the hills, and seemed to spread the vallies as it were with a sheet of water. The few sounds that were stirring at that time were uncommonly distinct: and the shepherd's voice, and the screeking of the plough, with the conversation of those who drove it, were heard close to one, when not the glimpse of a figure could be seen. As soon as a hound began to give his tongue on the great side-hill of Hawley wood, the sound afforded most romantic music across the valley to De-Clifford, and Woodvile, who were standing on the opposite slope:--soon after the dogs found:--at once the general cry broke forth--and the huntsman, with his horn,

“Blew an inspiring air that dale and thicket rung.”

The fox took his course over some very beautiful country towards WOODLANDS; and the cry of the hounds softened by distance came so musically across the window of
Mary,

Mary, that she hastened down to breakfast, and from thence into the park, to enjoy the echoes of the hounds and horn, amongst those romantic hills and vallies. But before she could be ready to leave the house, the mist was gone, and a strong wind had arisen, and with all her listening, she could hear no more of their sounds. However she enjoyed the wildness of the weather; and at length once or twice thought she heard a distant hollow, or two, and saw some horsemen crossing a corner of the park towards HAWLEY, upon which she determined to ascend a favourite hill, where there was a bench, from whence she might sit and hear, and perhaps see, them. Crossing the valley, she perceived two more straggling horsemen coming towards her, who on their approach she saw were Woodvile and his servant, and stayed to speak to him. Upon stopping his horse and addressing her, he turned so pale, and his voice was so tremulous, that she immediately supposed an accident had befallen some of the party, and felt herself in such an agitation, that Woodvile perceiving it, jumped

jumped off his horse, and after many assurances, convinced her of her fears being groundless. But she looked so beautiful that he could not persuade himself to join the chase again, as she begged him to do; but sending home his servant with his horses, determined to walk about the rest of the morning with her. She therefore took his arm, and they ascended the hill together. They sat upon the bench, and looked round them, while the fresh air of heaven blew in her face, and gave new colours to her divine countenance. They saw the shadows of the clouds, that were driven hastily along the sky, sweep across the plains beneath, and now beheld the tower of the distant cathedral glitter in the rays of the sun, and now, as the shades rapidly returned, lost it in the dark horizon. But they listened in vain for the voice of the hounds, and Woodvile now and then sighed deeply, as she turned her eyes to the woods of HAWLEY. Alas! he could no longer conceal from himself the madness of his passion for MARY DE-CLIFFORD. To perceive what a soul inhabited that

that angelic frame ; to hear that melodious voice ; to touch that white and delicate hand ; to behold the wind blowing about those auburn locks, and that most graceful frame ;—to sit by her, and receive her innocent attentions, were impossible, without drinking intoxicating draughts of the most delicious poison ! But from her, unsuspicious as she was, he yet determined to conceal his imprudent attachment. He considered the deranged state of his affairs ; he anticipated the opposition of Mrs. De-Clifford, and he feared a rival, whom, though he despised, he knew too many at least of the world would deem superior in his pretensions. But inspired as he was, (by the views they were contemplating, as Mary thought,) a melancholy lustre darted from his eyes, and the sentiments he expressed were so beautifully plaintive, that she felt a pleasure hitherto unknown to her. Yet, though he endeavoured to conceal from her the cause of his uneasiness, there was something sometimes so gloomy in his ideas, as alarmed her, and she wondered the more, because the family mis-

E

fortunes

fortunes to which she had heard her brother allude, and some of which were most probably the grounds of his complaints, were the loss of riches, which she conceived the elevated mind of Woodvile above repining after.

When he had been talking for some time in this mysterious way, he took out a pencil just as they heard a loud crack behind them from the falling of a tree, and writing down the following hasty lines, gave them to her to read.

S O N N E T.

Loud blows the wind ; the whistling woods among
 Whirl the fall'n leaves, and in the troubled sky.
 Quick and portentous drive the clouds along,
 While o'er the grass the hurried breezes sigh :
 Anon, the fearful moment past, the sun
 Breaks through the darkness ; and the brightened
 streams
 Roaring no more, in silent splendor run,
 While the white steeple glitters in his beams :
 Again the gloom collects, a louder groan
 Shakes all the groves, and down descends the rain ;
 And storms and sunshine mark by fits the day.
 Thus me by turns, oft pensive and alone,
 The passions rule ; O who shall soothe the Pain
 Beneath whose threats my youthful hopes decay ?

Mary

Mary was pleased with the description, unfinished and rough as it was, but at the conclusion shed a tear, which dropping on her hand, Woodvile instantly kissed away. Whatever was the unhappiness of Woodvile, she felt a sympathy which filled her with a delicious sort of tenderness, that affected her frame with new sensations. "Woodvile," said she, innocently putting her hand upon his, though her eyes were turned to the ground, "you cannot be unhappy, that heavenly mind cannot be unhappy; but if you are"
——— she hesitated—
"Indeed Woodvile, I cannot bear you should be unhappy." He pressed her hand, and absolutely unable to bear it, turned his face, and burst into tears:—then to recover himself, taking her arm under his, hastened down the hill with her to another part of the park. But he was only nourishing his own woe:—he envied the scattered leaves, on which she trod;—and the very winds, that blew upon her, and thought they became sanctified as they passed her. Once again in their return home they stopped at a favourite
E. 2 bench,

bench, and Mary stepped upon it to catch a sight of Woodvile's venerable old seat at GRAFTON in the next county, of which she had so often heard De-Clifford talk with rapture, and could just discover a glimpse of a few of its tallest trees in the horizon, when a sudden gust of wind had nearly blown her backwards, had she not been saved by being caught in the arms of Woodvile. She felt a distress such as she had not often experienced, and Woodvile not less agitated than herself, attempted to divert it, by returning to the subject of Grafton.

They hurried on towards the house, while the sky looked awfully gloomy, and the wind blew so by fits, that Mary could scarce support herself but by the arm of Woodvile. She lamented the devastation that the blasts made among the leaves, and beheld the arm of a favourite tree shivered off, but had no time to examine it for fear of the approaching storm. When she was safe in the house, she was pleased with the loud tempests roaring round her, and enjoyed them the whole

whole evening, as a tremendous concert for most of the gentlemen after the chace were engrossed with the conviviality of the table, so that the ladies soon retired, and appeared not the rest of the day. Mary went full of imagination to bed, and after a restless and feverish night, rose early, and on looking out of her windows, experienced sentiments which cloathed themselves in the following lines—

The morn, in dewy beauty bright,
Opes to illume the skirts of night,
And deep behind the western wood,
No more the half-pierc'd shadows brood:
Yet scarce the foot of Labor's seen
Trailing his path in deeper green,
While herds and flocks, uncall'd to gaze
At early wanderer, quiet graze.
O scenes of peace, ye calm to rest
Th' uneasy tremblings of my breast!
Sprites, that, by midnight dark and lone,
Haunted my tearful dreams, are flown.
Sighing in concert with the blast,
Round the tall battlements they past;
While I in feverish fancies tost,
Seemed in strange distant countries lost,
By friends abandon'd, while the cry
Of savage nations bade me dye.
A heavenly youth arose to save
The suff'rer from an early grave:

Yet scarce the saviour seem'd to rise,
Ere cruel murder clos'd his eyes.
Such were the fancies of the night,—
Sweet Morn, thou putt'st them all to flight!
And, in their stead, a train I find
Of soothing visions fill my mind!
Hours of my childhood, I renew
Fancies of rapture, as I view
Yon shelter'd bench, and yonder lawn
Calls back a thousand pleasures gone.
But ah! that wood, whose tawny leaf
Tho' beauteous, bears the shades of grief,
Fills me with pains, I know not why,
And every glance renews a sigh.
Thou fading year, does Fate ordain
I ne'er should view thy spring again?
Yet why, foreboding future ill,
My soul with vain disquiets fill?
Methinks more bliss is in my woe,
Than all th' unmingled joys I e'er could know.

She now stole into the park, and wandered about an hour before breakfast; and at length heard the great bell in one of the towers ring as a summons. She had strayed over the valley that crosses the front of the house, as far as the opposite hill; it was a bright clear morning, and at that distance the sound was so pleasingly softened, that she
had

had never heard it ring half so romantically before. She hastened home, and found most of the party assembled; Mrs. De-Clifford seemed in high spirits, but almost all the circle appeared unwell from the jollities of the preceding evening; and her brother looked agitated and unhappy; yet he smiled with great affection on her, whose eyes and voice of tenderness, and sweet attentions towards him, were the delight of all his friends;—but she was surprized not to find Woodvile in the room, though had not courage to ask what was become of him. At length he entered, hastily putting a letter into his pocket, and with a face of uncommon melancholy, yet mixed by fits with such flashes of fire darting from his eyes, as filled the intelligent part of the room with apprehensions. Mary turned pale; her tender heart was affected, yet, she knew not why, she endeavoured to conceal her emotion; she strove therefore not to turn her eyes towards him; now and then indeed she caught his countenance, and then though it was wretched, there was an inexpressible tenderness in it; but she did not see what De-Clifford

Clifford and Hungerford perceived, sometimes the most wild and furious looks as his face was turned from the company. Every one was afraid to ask him questions, but he soon rung the bell, and ordered his servants, and horses. Then making a hurried apology, he told Mrs. De-Clifford sudden business called him to Grafton. De-Clifford, who had supposed a cause of this kind, which he feared was but too well founded, determined not to add to his uneasiness by renewing the subject to him, but only asked him, if he could be of any service by accompanying him. To which he answered, "No," in a firm, yet mournful tone. But Mary involuntarily cried out, "Pray let my brother go with you--you are not well, Mr. Woodvile." He bowed, and his countenance for the first time wore a smile, but he instantly turned round, and walked to the window. As he looked out, there lay the arm of the tree across the avenue, that they had yesterday passed just as it was blown down. This he could not bear, and his recovering countenance being torn with fresh emotions, he hastened

tened out of the room. Sir Peter Lumm had that morning told the party of his intention to give a ball at Hawley, in about a fortnight, which he intended should be very splendid, and had begged that Mary De-Clifford might honour him with her company, (though she had never yet been introduced in public,) and hinted indeed that it was entirely given for her. Mary could not but be pleased at the thought; and her mother was much flattered with the compliment. But Woodvile's appearance had put all this out of their heads again: the horses came to the door, and hastily taking his leave, he looked with inexpressible anguish at Mary, and hurried out of the room. He mounted instantly, and was soon out of sight of the party, who watched him from the windows of the drawing room.

C H A P. II.

MARY, who as soon as Woodvile was gone, had left the room, ran into her apartment, and there saw from her window, as he turned the corner of the Westwood, the last glimpse of his figure. She sat for some moments motionless, and at last burst into a flood of tears:—yet why should she be so affected?—she had often seen him depart before without such emotion—but now he was unhappy—and could she see the dear friend of her brother, with whom she had spent so many hours of her happy childhood, and whose elegant cheerfulness had so often delighted the family circle, and could she see him depart she knew not whither, distracted with mysterious woe, and not be miserable?

miserable? Long did she sit there lost in her musings, when De-Clifford called her to walk;—he found her with swollen eyes, from which she had but just wiped the last tear; but as he knew the tenderness of her heart, and was himself so much affected with the event of the morning, he would not tease her with questions.—Yet who should she meet in descending the stair case, but Sir Peter Lumm? Against the impertinent enquiries of his countenance, she felt, she knew not why, uncommon distress, and pulling her bonnet as well as she could over her eyes, attempted to pass him with as slight notice as possible, but he the more eagerly entered into conversation, and determined to join them in their walk. Even he had seemed to feel a momentary chagrin at the melancholy of Woodvile, but I fear he shewed a deceitful face. He now began with the subject of his intended ball, and displayed with all the triumph of foolish and vulgar vanity the splendor of the future entertainment; and then, as if the heart of Mary must dance with pleasure at the description,

scription, looked in her face with an air of triumph for his reward. Yet what was his disappointment when he perceived her so absent, that she did not seem even to know what he was talking about, but had her eyes fixed at that moment upon a bench under a deep shade at a little distance, where, as they approached it, she stooped down, and snatching up a piece of paper that lay among the leaves, hastily put it into her pocket. Sir Peter's curiosity was enflamed, but she would not shew it him; he grew half-angry—"Some billet-doux of Woodvile's, I suppose," said he spitefully:—Mary blushed—De-Clifford reddened.—But it passed off—and she contrived to shorten the walk as much as she could ——— But Sir Peter determined to be revenged.

That day and the next passed without that good-humour and conviviality, that used to preside at Woodlands.

Berney therefore proposed a scheme of paying him a visit of a few days at a hunting
ing

ing box he had in another part of the county, and intreated the ladies to be of the party. Mrs. De-Clifford at first declined, but upon persuasion yielded. So Berney left them that morning to prepare in his cottage for so large a party, and the next day, the whole circle set out, the ladies in a close carriage with their own horses;—and the gentlemen rode.

Mary, though not in her usual spirits, was pleased with the new scenery she had an opportunity of viewing. The road lay for many miles along some high ground, that rose above the banks of a noble river, which was frequently hid from their sight by intervening wood, through which a variety of openings continually displayed the blue surface of the waters crowded with vessels of all sizes, some at anchor, and some gliding along with the most majestic motion, and displaying their white sails to the sun.

They dined at a large and famous inn upon the road, standing by itself, some miles from any town, at the edge of a wild common,

mon, planted thick with ancient oaks, that give it the appearance of that sort of forest, of which Mary had often read in her favorite romances. The indistinct sight of cottage children or of cattle, glancing among the trees at a distance in these open groves, had a very picturesque effect, and soothed the pensive mind of Mary, as she set herself down at the window, whilst dinner was preparing. This too she remembered was a favourite spot of De-Clifford and Woodvile, whom she had continually heard talk of it even from her childhood; for it was their frequent rendezvous after the fatigues of the chace, when it was too late to reach home.

Just as they were departing, a hunting party arrived, whose horn sounding in a most romantic manner across the common, had called Mary to the window. The dogs and men among the trees formed a beautiful picture. The gentlemen passing by the window where Mary was, had too much politeness to put her out of countenance by staring, but could not avoid being attracted by her person.

person. She retired distressed; and when they left the room, saw a genteel young man, whose eyes had two or three times met her's, talking with Hungerford at the carriage-door, and as they approached to get into it, Hungerford introduced his eldest brother Lord MOLYNS, who seemed much pleased with the opportunity of such an acquaintance.

They now hastened on, as the dark was approaching, to Berney's box at Denham-hatch, where they arrived safe before seven o'clock.—Berney had of course allotted a very good chamber for the ladies; and for the young men, as his house was small, he made up such beds as he could.—The evening passed in cards, while Mary in those moments, when by Sir Peter's engagements at the table, she could get rid of his tiresome talkativeness, contemplated from the window by the light of the moon the new scenery around her.

The next morning, when she rose, she was delighted with the situation of the house.

It stood near the top of a slope, that descended into a deep valley, which crossed a long and mighty range of hills, and the front running parallel with the vale, commanded over an open downy country, a distant view of the broad ocean, expanding its blue waters to the horizon, while behind lay displayed on a wide flat beneath her, a rich woody scenery full of towns, and villages, and spires. The sun, when she first waked, had not long risen, and a flame of gold formed a curtain behind the waves. Yet in a few moments she looked out, and sighed, when she found not the beloved objects of Woodlands. Here she should be obliged to be always in company: and though she might enjoy these scenes alone, yet she felt that society disturbed the musings she loved, and now for the first time perceived that she could sometimes enjoy a prospect or a walk better even without the company of De-Clifford.

Perney, always good-humoured, and now enlivened by vanity, as soon as breakfast was over, shewed his stables, his garden, and his prospects

prospects with considerable delight. The former were so neat, and cleanly, and contained two or three such beautiful animals, that even Mary, no judge of those matters, expressed her admiration. But Sir Peter Lumm contrived continually to introduce something about Hawley; the largeness of his stud, and the convenience of his offices; then cast an oblique look of enquiry at Mary, as if the splendor of his establishment must be irresistible. I cannot deny that her mother was too often pleased with his ostentation, and perhaps looked forward with some satisfaction to such a settlement in future for her daughter: but to Mary he had formerly been insipid, and was at present disgusting. Self-conceit however hid from him this mortifying circumstance and he increased rather than lessened his assiduities; and even in cases, which he could not misconstrue, felt his passion inflamed by neglects.

A hunting party on the second morning released the ladies for a few hours from a society become troublesome to Mary, for the

solitude she loved. Then did she wander out accompanied by her mother to enjoy from the top of the hills the bold scenery around her. It was a grey autumnal morning, and the sea, of which she commanded a vast reach, was almost a new object to her. Mrs. De-Clifford, who was a bad walker, rested on a bench, while she wandered forth, partly to explore new points of view, and partly perhaps to give an unrestrained indulgence to the luxury of her own thoughts, in which for some days she had felt a more than usual pleasure.—But she had seen two or three young men gallop by her at a distance on the downs, and began to be alarmed. Once she saw a figure she thought she knew approaching her, but it past her so fast, that she was convinced she was deceived, yet was so frightened she had nearly fainted. Not thinking herself therefore secure in these unknown parts, she was hastening back to Mrs. De-Clifford, when she was overtaken and addressed by an elegant young man on horseback, whom she immediately knew to be Lord MOLYNS. He had been delighted
with

with her beauty the other day at the inn, and had determined therefore to take the advantage of his brother Hungerford's acquaintance to pay a visit at Denham-hatch, before the part had left it. But the meeting Miss De-Clifford on this spot, and by herself too, was an unexpected pleasure. The freshness of the morning air had given a double lustre to her beauty, and careless and dishevelled by the wind as her graceful figure appeared, Lord Molyns thought her the most perfect angel he had ever seen. He alighted from his horse, and begged leave to attend her back to Mrs. De Clifford. He was under no difficulty in finding conversation, for he wanted not confidence: his person was so agreeable, and his manners so lively, insinuating, and exquisitely polished, added to very good natural abilities, that he had been a general favourite with the women. He knew how to accommodate, and never offended by vanity or ostentation. But with all this, he was at the bottom, expensive, unprincipled, and profligate in the extreme, — so much so, that his brother Hungerford, who

who knew he had no heart, and who was himself all openness and generosity, associated with him, as little as possibly he could with so near a relation. Yet as few knew his character, he thought himself bound not to divulge the secret.

Mary felt a prejudice in favor of the brother of Hungerford, and listened not without pleasure to his conversation. She enquired, if he had before passed her, at some distance, that morning, but he assured her he was then come strait from the inn, where he had the honor of seeing her the other day. She was naturally superstitious and had been uneasy at the figures she had seen near her, but on the arrival of Lord Molyns had been satisfied; now however her fears revived, though of course she said nothing about them. At length she distinctly saw a horseman in a blue coat on the slope of the hill at a distance, and pointed him out to Lord Molyns, who plainly discerned him also, but on their stopping to look, the figure as if aware of it, turned his horse, and so precipitately

cipitately galloped down the hill, that they every moment expected he would break his neck. At length they saw him arrive safe at the bottom and leap over an high hedge into a lane, in which he disappeared; and then they walked forward.

Lord Molyns seemed to think no more about it, but Mary was evidently much agitated, and though she soon recovered herself sufficiently to conceal her farther feelings, could not get the circumstance out of her mind for days. Mrs. De-Clifford, at seeing them approach, could not guess at her daughter's companion, but was much pleased, as they came nearer, to recognize Lord Molyns, who accompanied them to the house, and spending the morning with them, was near eclipsing her favorite Sir Peter.

Berney, on coming home, invited him to dinner, to which he staid, and added to the conviviality of the circle. Most of the company were pleased with him, and even innocent Mary felt flattered by his compliments.

But

But Sir Peter sat fullen, and overawed : and afterwards shewed such a childish jealousy, as raised the laugh, and the contempt of almost the whole company. The dark came ; it was a dismal night, wet, and windy, yet, as there was no room in the house, Lord Molyns, with a proper spirit, that again raised the boyish envy of Sir Peter, mounted his horse to ride ten miles, through bye, and unknown roads.

Mary, whose spirits had been a little revived by the cheerfulness of the circle retired wearied and melancholy to bed. — Wild dreams disturbed her rest, and she walked unhappy.

Hungerford in the morning perceived her heavy eyes, and with those polite and benevolent, yet unobtrusive attentions, which distinguished him, attempted to amuse her. He had taken it into his head, that she was more than commonly pleased with Lord Molyns, a circumstance, which, knowing his brother's character, gave him some uneasiness.

easiness. He attempted therefore, in the morning walk they took together, by some deep yet very delicate raillery to penetrate her thoughts. But of his suspicions she was so little conscious, that she did not even understand him. On then they strayed along the hills, sometimes looking at the distant and troubled ocean, and sometimes on the woody wilds on the other side. But Mary loved better to talk of the old haunts at Woodlands.

When they came to one of the benches, on which she had sat for some time musing the day before, she again took the opportunity of resting there, to contemplate one of the finest views which that high ground commanded. Here she almost instantly saw a folded piece of paper stuck into one of the crevices, which she had the curiosity to take up, and open. It contained the following lines written in a very hasty and irregular hand.

SONNET.

S O N N E T.

Cross these lone downs th' unhappy wanderer strays,
 Views the seas spread, and hears the billows roar,
 While no kind friend his moody footsteps stays,
 Or seeks his bosom's quiet to restore. —
 Perchance, O Stranger, should'st thou find these lays
 Shed tears of pity as thou read'st them o'er;
 For dark and gloomy pass his tedious days,
 While years of lost delight his thoughts deplore.
 She, heavenly angel—(ah! in vain the thought
 These mystic lines will ever meet her eyes—)
 Sees the wing'd moments speed with rapture fraught,
 And, lost in flattery, dreams not of his sighs!
 Yet she perchance will drop a precious tear,
 When calm at length he rests upon his bier.

She read them hastily over, turned very pale, and could scarce conceal from Hungerford, to whom she gave them, her emotion. But Hungerford, from whom they seemed to gain but very slight notice, soon returned them with a laugh at the lovesick swain, who penned them, adding that they were probably copied from some of the many foolish love-books of a circulating library. Mary, who thought otherwise, said nothing, but putting them into her pocket, became very pensive all the way home. She thought she

knew

knew the hand; she thought she traced the style; and had an indistinct confusion of ideas, which she felt she scarce dared, if she could, to reduce to clearness. She recollected the horseman that haunted the spot the day before. Yet it could not be Woodvile, for he was at Grafton;—and if it was, what could he mean? How could the situation described be that of Woodvile? With whom could he be in love? Her heart alternately sickened and thrilled at the idea. Then Woodvile miserable, Woodvile jealous and deserted, occurred to her. But who could be hard-hearted to Woodvile? She was conscious—not herself—and again, felt a sickness, such as till that day she had never experienced. From that moment a mixture of incoherent feelings so harraffed her, that after dinner she complained of the headache, and joined the party no more that day.

The next morning she rose after a restless night, that had however been relieved at intervals with dreams soothing to her imagination

gination, and wandered out by herself to brace her shattered nerves with the freshness of the early air. Lost in her musings, she had almost involuntarily reached the old walks without knowing it. The occurrence of yesterday was present to her mind. But who could be the object of Woodvile's attachment? She could find no reason to think it was herself. Yet still the lines must be Woodvile's—and she, who had engaged his heart, must live hereabouts:—she then recollected his abrupt and mysterious departure from Woodlands—and turning her eyes again upon the country around her, felt an instant sinking at her heart, and hated the scenes, that till now had filled her with such admiration.

These ideas were too painful to be endured: she turned her thoughts to more pleasing images; she recollected his constant attentions to her; his looks of ineffable sweetness, whenever they beamed on her; his conversation with her in the window of the drawing-room the evening before he left Woodlands:
a faint

a faint and sick hope of she knew not what played about her heart. Yet why? Could she find comfort in the thought that Woodvile was unhappy? Then again his image wandering melancholy and alone, over this wild country, no friend to speak to, and perhaps no house to defend him from the storms, overwhelmed her tender fancy; yet thoughts still more dreadful recurred to her--Woodvile angry, and unforgiving--she could bear any thing rather than the anger of Woodvile. She burst into tears, and rested for some moments on the bench, and then feeling herself a little relieved by the balmy air of one of the most beautiful autumnal mornings, that ever were seen, vented her heart in the following lines.

I.

How soft the breezes blow!

How bright the face of heaven!

Yet what avails it to the woe

Of never being forgiven?

Methinks the yellow lights, that fit

Upon the fading grove,

The pensive mourner would befit.

Who wails her hapless love!

Yet naught on earth can cure my care,
If I another's days have clouded with despair!

II.

But I,—alas! could I
Have caus'd the sufferer's grief,
Who, did he for a moment sigh,
Could weep for his relief?
O thou, whose heavenly tongue so oft
I've heard with rapt amaze,
Whose thoughts divine, and accents soft
Have charm'd my childish days!
I ne'er could think thy warier fight
In Mary's simple form could ever find delight.

III.

But ah! my fears are vain.—
Yet in the thought I feel
A pleasure mingled with the pain,
That half my grief would heal.
For sure it may not be too late,
Since Angels guard him round;
And, if with such a power kind Fate
This little form has crown'd,
Blest were my voice his pangs to calm,
And in his bosom's storms these tears to pour their
balm!

IV.

Yet whither does he stray?
Perchance in woods alone
He hears, throughout the mournful day,
The bending forest groan:

Or

Or on yon cliffs stupendous steep
 His listless limbs may throw,
 While loud upon the troubled deep
 The waters burst below.—
 Oh Heaven, the gentle youth defend,
 Lest wild Despair his steps down the dread flood should
 send!

V.

Perchance in glimmering glades
 The lonely Moon he woos,
 Till, as its silver radiance fades,
 He, mid descending dews,
 In dismal darkness wanders on
 Thro' dreary paths unknown:—
 In vain he prays for cheerful dawn,
 Unheard he pours his moan;
 While I, if I have caus'd his pain,
 Bid not this little voice call back his peace again.

VI.

But yet this childish tongue
 Th' attention ne'er could raise
 Of him, whose lyre divine has rung
 With heavenly angels' praise:
 Ne'er could this little form with sighs
 Fill that exalted heart,
 Nor could these inexpressive eyes
 A passion there impart.—
 Of flattery born, begone, ye Fears,
 For surely Mary's shape is guiltless of his tears!

VII.

Then hail, autumnal gleams,
 And soothe this heart to peace!
 Your beauty to the mourner seems
 From tortures a release.
 Ye glittering spires, and yellow woods,
 'Mid scatter'd hamlets gay;
 And ye, ye calm and spreading floods,
 That sparkle with the day,
 With you, in solitude be mine
 To nurse my musing soul with Fancy's dreams divine!

But these were truly the visions of a poetess. Nothing would have added less to the peace of Mary, diffident as she was, than the conviction that she had no charms to please Woodvile, and that his heart was devoted to another. But in the unaffected desire for his happiness, and the confused and almost opposite wishes of her own bosom, she felt an anarchy, which rendered her completely ignorant of the requisites to her own comfort. She returned musing to the house, sometimes lost in pleasing melancholy, and sometimes distracted with images of unmixed pain. The party at Berney's was become wearisome to her; and she was delighted to hear

hear the next day fixed for their return home. Yet once again early on the morning of their departure did she visit the bench upon the downs, but no traces of human figures were now to be seen there; they were deserted, and lonely; and she delighted to return to her favourite haunts at Woodlands.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Woodvile so abruptly left Woodlands, he had, as De-Clifford supposed, been called to Grafton by a letter from his steward on some disagreeable emergency of his affairs. It was night before he got there: for though by fits he had rode fast, his horse had often for miles together moved a foot-pace without his being aware of it. The moon rose, before he entered the vast forest, in which his seat is situated. When he arrived near enough the house, to see the reflection of her beams upon the broad water of the moat, and heard at the same moment the clock on the great tower of the inner quadrangle strike ten, redoubled as it was by the distant echoes of a clear, and still evening, enthusiastic affection for his native

tive

tive spot, the long, long residence of his renowned ancestors; a painful pleasure on looking back to the days of his childhood, with which that scene and that sound was so strongly associated in his fancy; contrasted with the gloomy prospects of the future, made an impression on his mind, which was never erased. Again he was waked from a reverie, as his horses hoofs echoed on the draw-bridge; and at the familiar sound recollection once more of the past, melted his countenance, which he had but just time to recover as he passed cross the quadrangles, when his mother and sisters met him on the upper step of the long and gloomy old hall. They received him with great affection, which he returned as well as he could, but finding his broken spirits unable to throw a veil over his unhappiness for a long time, soon made the fatigue of a long ride an excuse for retiring to bed; and as he passed along the long gallery, amid three centuries of portraits of Beauty, Heroism, and Learning, mixed with the blood of the Plantagenets,

ragemets, and Tudors, he sighed for the diminished splendor of the house of Woodville.

His mother was of a family eminently illustrious, which had shone for two hundred years in the highest ranks with undiminished lustre, and under whose patronage had been fostered one of the brightest luminaries of the English language. She had an house in town, but usually with her daughters spent the summer months with her son at Grafton.

Elinor Woodvile was his favourite sister. Her airy vivacity formed a pleasing contrast to the energetic enthusiasm of her brother. She often laughed with lively raillery at the dullness of the old mansion at Grafton, and her brother was frequently pleased with the good natured humour, with which he described its moat, its draw-bridge, its dark passages, and gloomy windows. She had now completed her nineteenth year, and might well be called handsome. A clear brown complexion; dark yet beautiful hair; expressive eyes,

eyes, and an elegant, though not tall, figure, had gained her no inconsiderable admiration in the circles of London. She had, with all her airiness, a very tender heart, and doated upon her eccentric, and often melancholy, brother. Penetrating therefore as she was, she had perceived, and been exquisitely hurt at, the dejection of his mind. As soon then as she had risen in the morning, she tapped at his door, but hearing no answer, and perceived it ajar, pushed it open, but found not her brother there.

Restless and miserable, he had early left his bed, and was hastening into the forest through the hall, when as the morning sun sat upon the oriel window, full of painted glass, his eyes were arrested with the arms of Woodvile, and De-Clifford impaled together, and twice repeated; with which his attention was so engaged, that he threw himself down upon the great oak table at the top of the hall, on which our EDWARDS, and our HENRYS, had so often feasted, and gazing with eyes that soon ceased to see, was for a long time
lost

lost in his own contemplations, till his sister Elinor returning from his chamber-door in search of him, roused him from his reverie. “Dear brother,” she cried, “you are not well.” He started at the sound of her voice: “surely” she continued “you do not seem well.” “Oh yes, Ellen,” (for so he always called her,) “Oh, yes, Ellen, I am,” said he somewhat confusedly, “but I was admiring the beauty of the sun thro’ that painted window.” “Very fine indeed” she replied a little archly, “but don’t you think it would be finer thro’ a Venetian blind in the streets of London?—” “Ellen” answered he, with some energy, “at the loss of that window, I would not buy the finest house that London can produce.” “Oh, don’t be angry, brother,” she rejoined, “but I own I see no pleasure in these ancient scrawls, by way of painting;—and I can’t see it much signifies, what were the names and arms of my grandmothers, and great grandmothers—whether they were Stafford, or Scales, or Stanley, or Brandon, or Clifford—whether they were
“crosses,

“ crosses, or scallop-shells, or stags heads,
“ or lions, or checquers.”* He blushed,
and then turned pale.—“ But perhaps,” she
continued with a sly look in his face, “ you
“ mean they should save trouble, and confi-
“ der them as the symbols of modern alliances.”

“ But I have a friend in the house, who,
“ though her arms are not to be found
“ amongst the hideous figures of that win-
“ dow, will I hope make you ample amends
“ by her personal attractions, and put all
“ your foolish veneration for antiquity out
“ of your head.” Woodvile was displeased
with her levity, and looked almost angrily
in her face. She had sensibility with all her
airiness, and felt corrected.

Woodvile left her, and strolled out into
the forest. The pinnacles and battlements
seemed to smile on the deep waters of the

* I suppose she alluded to the De-Clifford arms,
checquy, gold and blue ; over all, a red fesse.

moat; and through the mists of the dewy morning, half-pierced by the brightness of the rising sun, the old mansion rose like a scene of enchantment. The wet leaves that were strewn thick beneath his feet, sent up a fragrance as he trod on them, which reminded him of former days, and he sighed again from the bottom of his heart, as he looked up at the towers of Grafton. At that moment his sister Elinor with another lady under her arm was at his elbow, and he started as her well-known voice introduced to him—Emily Barnard. Distressed and ashamed, he bowed respectfully, but felt a momentary indignation at his wicked sister for the interruption.

Emily Barnard, the daughter of a rich merchant, had a commanding person, and a liveliness of eye, that it was difficult to escape. Her affectation was to be a woman of fashion; of this, though she had some understanding, she was continually talking; and under the ease and indifference affected on this account, endeavoured to hide the strong natural sensibilities

sibilities of her heart. There was now a playfulness in the manner of her, and her friend, which quite overcame the present melancholy humour of Woodvile. He escaped therefore from them, as soon as he could, and, to the excessive mortification of Miss Barnard's vanity, appeared not at breakfast, till it was nearly over.

Mrs. Woodvile was affected by the pallid and worn looks of her beloved son, for whose indignant passions and prevalent imagination she was in continual terror, but enquired in vain for the cause of his uneasiness, since from her Woodvile, and the steward, kept any little distress in his affairs with inviolable secrecy. Miss Barnard, who excelled in music, determined to make amends for the neglect she had received; and on the harpsichord which stood in the little breakfast-room, where they were sitting, played a lively air or two, with which Woodvile seemed so little pleased, that he had first risen in restless agitation from his chair, and was now, as she perceived, leaving

the room, when she changed her hand to some exquisitely melancholy notes, accompanied with faint tones of a most plaintive voice,—at which he first stood with the door in his hand, and then, as if ashamed of himself, dropped upon a chair in a corner of the room, when, as the little forcerefs perceived the charm prevail, she exerted still more her uncommon powers, till by degrees he glided into the seat by the side of the harp-fichord, and leaning his head on his arm, raised it not again without her having the triumph, by an oblique glance, to observe the wet traces of fallen tears in either eye.

But the charm could not last: the ærial visions soon vanished; and he found himself on earth again. He sat for some time in the little projecting gothic window, that overhangs the moat, and then, when the ladies appeared to be quite out of his way, strolled out again through the hall, and quadrangle, over the draw-bridge, into the forest, and as he again looked round and contemplated the majestic mansion of his ancestors,

ancestors, and recollected again the many busy splendors, with which it formerly had been honoured, vented his feelings in his usual manner by recourse to poetry, which produced the ensuing lines.

S O N N E T.

Ye mouldring towers, these waters deep surround,
 That, age succeeding age, the forest-shades
 Of yon romantic wilds have proudly crown'd!
 The voice of revelry no more invades
 Your dreary courts; nor yet with tuneful sound
 Do royal Edwards wooe the Aonian maids
 To melt the fair, who on their suit has frown'd;*
 But, shook by Time and Fate, your Glory fades.
 No more shall Beauty with her winning eyes
 Brighten your halls, and o'er your feasts preside,
 But sad and lonely while your master flies
 O'er distant lands, his sorrows to divide,
 Silence shall reign along your cheerless walls,
 Save when disturb'd by nightly spirits calls.

But these flights of fancy were not always to be indulged; duty and affection demanded other exertions; his mother expected his company; his sisters were not

* Alluding, I suppose, to the courtship between Edw. IV, and Elizabeth Woodvile.

easy without his conversation; and Emily Barnard was arming all the artillery of her eyes for conquest. He returned therefore to the house, and by a forced cheerfulness attempted for a time at least to expell the image that engrossed his soul. But how unpleasant now was the vivacity of Elinor; how insipid was the coquetry of her friend! A day or two passed in this way, during which he seized every moment he could gain to himself, to indulge in his favourite melancholy; but to Miss Barnard the triumph became more desirable, as it seemed less easy, and she increased in her attentions, till her heart became half interested. She ceased to talk of him with Elinor; and instead of lively rencontres contrived by two giddy girls, she stole out by herself to cross his walks in the forest, and once or twice, as if by accident, met him in the long gallery by moonlight. There was something luxurious in her person; her eyes were full and voluptuous, and the pensive cast of her countenance became her better than the gay. She had penetration enough to find out the tone of
of

of his mind, and contrived continually to throw out sentiments, in which he was at this time particularly delighted to find a sympathy with himself, and by which she so far gained his confidence as a friend, that she sometimes flattered herself it was the coincidence of love. But she had by some art drawn from his sister, who had attempted to conceal from her very carefully her own ideas on this point, the suspicion of his attachment to another; and had also an opinion that it was to a sister of his friend De-Clifford; yet of her she had some doubts, because she had heard she was then no more than sixteen, and had been so far from being hitherto introduced into the world, that she had scarce ever left Woodlands.

Various means did she contrive, by which to prove her opinion; sometime as if by accident she dropped the name of Mary De-Clifford, and sometimes did she launch out in raillery at the accomplishments of an insipid girl of sixteen, who had been immured all her life in the old family mansion in the country.

country. At these times it was with difficulty that she could conceal from herself the colour that one while flushed his cheeks, and at another the indignation, that darted from his eyes. But the allurements she displayed were such, that it was difficult for him always to avoid her, and still more difficult always to be angry. Her passions were now really engaged; and indeed there was something in the expression and manners of Woodvile, so irresistible, that, wherever he did not raise hatred by silent and unmixed contempt, (to which perhaps he was a little too much addicted,) he was almost certain in an uncommon degree to interest. He could not but observe that, on every opportunity, his mother and sisters were very strong advocates in favour of Emily; and the conflicts, to which this situation continually reduced him, almost drove him at times to phrenzy. Miss Barnard, among other arts by which she now strove to undermine Mary De-Clifford, attempted to raise his dislike of her by awakening his jealousy. But she was caught in her own trap. It was evident indeed

deed that he was sufficiently affected by it: he discovered through the whole remainder of the day the disorders of his mind; and the next morning early, having left a message with his own servant for his mother, that he should be absent a few days on business, took his horse, and disappeared. Emily was truly affected, when she came down, to breakfast, and heard of his hasty departure; and soon stealing up into her own room to vent her tears, blamed herself a thousand times; and then, as if recollecting herself, cried out, in the energetic words of Shakespeare,

“ But now he’s gone, and my idolatrous Fancy
“ Must sanctify his image.”

Even to her the deep forests by day, and the moon shining on the waters by night, seemed now to be pleasing images: and the dreams of crowded streets and brilliant assemblies no longer haunted her fancy.

Some days elapsed, and Woodvile at length returned; but oh! how altered! With fallen cheeks, eyes almost bursting out
of

of his head, dishevelled hair, and all his dress completely neglected. Sometimes he sat for an hour together as unmoved and as mute as a statue; and now and then would talk with such energetic melancholy, as, though the sublimity of his ideas was almost super-human, was so affecting, as to be beyond the endurance of a mind of much sensibility. Emily meanwhile was nourishing love and despair together; and was displaying every female art to engage the notice of the object, by whom she was attracted. Sighs, looks, a beautiful bosom half displayed while it beat with tenderness, and a luxurious figure, were all aimed at the engaged heart of Woodvile. A sweet voice, that could drop occasionally in half-veiled expressions the tenderest things, often displayed itself in the most plaintive songs, and a hand and arm extremely white and delicate drew such notes from the harpsichord, as often pierced his melancholy soul. But these things only added to his unhappiness: the assiduity of her attentions might for a moment be endured while she artfully contrived

trived to bring before his mind Mary De-Clifford listening to the flattery of another; but then again the simple form of Mary De-Clifford in all her angelic purity of mind and person recurred to his fancy, and at the sight of Emily Barnard it was difficult to repress his disgust.

Where art thou, Mary, pure as fair,
And fragrant as the balmy air,
That, passing, steals upon its wing
The varied perfumes of the Spring?
With tender bosom, white as snow;
With auburn locks that freely flow
Upon thy marble neck; with cheeks,
On which the blush of morning breaks;
Eyes, in whose pure and heavenly beams
The radiance of enchantment seems;
A voice, whose melting tones would still
The madness of Revenge from ill;
A form of such a graceful mould,
We scarce an earthly shape behold;
A mind of so divine a fire,
As angels only could inspire?—
Where art thou, Mary? For the sod
Is hallow'd, where thy feet have trod;
And every leaf that's touch'd by thee,
Is sanctified, sweet maid, to me.
Where dost thou lean thy pensive head?
Thy tears what tender tale can shed?

Where

Where dost thou stretch thy snowy arm,
And with thy plaintive accents charm? —
But hold! that image through my frame
Raises a wild tempestuous flame. —
Oh! Mary, Mary, let the tale
Of luckier votaries prevail,
And happier, happier days be thine:—
But woes and phrenzy must be mine.

It was thus that he vented his feelings on this occasion, and by the practice of this favourite talent, in which he often found it easier to express his thoughts, than in prose, sometimes softened, though he could not cure, the anxieties of his mind.

C H A P. IV.

MARY De-Clifford meanwhile was indulging herself in her native shades of Woodlands, often wandering out under the protection of her brother, whose party had now left him, though sometimes interrupted by Sir Peter Lumm; the neighbourhood of whose seat at Hawley gave him frequent opportunities of visiting her. The intercourse was encouraged by Mrs. De-Clifford, whose son however continually expressed such a fatigue and disgust with the repetition of his company, that, had it not been for her remonstrances, he would often have shewn it in his presence. The winds were now rapidly stripping from the trees the remains of the foliage, which lay thickly strewed every
I where

where upon the ground : the sun grew fainter ; and the air became frequently sharp and cold. Yet nothing could prevent Mary from her favourite walks ; unless now and then the fear of being obtruded upon, when alone there, by Sir Peter, at whose importunate attentions she felt aversion, and whose very touch she thought injurious to the sanctity of the passion she now could not conceal from herself that she nourished for Woodvile. This passion was of a nature more gentle, than that which Woodvile, in consequence of particular circumstances, felt for her : his, though it sometimes filled his fancy with images of delight, was too often mixed with gloomy fears of the future, with wild jealousies, and impetuous torments ; her attachment on the other hand was exquisitely tender and luxurious ; and though it was now and then mixed with some doubts and fears, altogether tinged her imagination with new colours, threw a sort of fairy light over all the scenery around her, and gave such a general thrill through her delicate frame

frame as caused sensations, which language has no power to describe.

De-Clifford began now to perceive something of distress in Mary's eyes and manner, as he mentioned the name of Woodvile; and her mother was continually launching out in raillery at the uselessness of imagination and brilliant talents without the sense that shines in the common intercourse of society, and of the folly of the pride of blood without an estate sufficient to support its pretensions, and then cast enquiring eyes upon the countenance of Mary, as she dropped the fated name of Woodvile.

The time for Sir Peter's ball now approached. Most female minds at her age would have danced with pleasure at the thought of it. But her love of solitude was now encreased by the impressions of her heart. Yet she pined for the sight of Woodvile, whom at some happy moments she flattered herself she might meet there. Every bench on which she had sat with him; every

view she had contemplated with him ; and every walk, in which she had listened to his conversation was now become sacred to her ; and every moment she could gain to herself to retrace the steps they had trod together, was the greatest enjoyment she had. The hasty progress of winter, whose change had formerly delighted her, now gave her pain, for it often prevented her favourite walks. The dark cold days of November chilled her delicate frame, and often hid in deep mists the distant trees of Grafton, to which her eyes were continually turned. Now and then indeed the last softened gleams of Autumn upon the faded foliage, and russet grass, thick bespangled with dew, gave a morning of uncommon beauty ; and her poetical imagination, that had received new hues from her attachment, amounted almost to inspiration. Oh could but an intelligent painter have crossed her invisibly in her walks at that time, and seen the unusual illumination of her beautiful countenance, they might have painted such a being as scarce ever walked on earth before !

The

The morning appointed for the ball arrived. Mary dressed herself with a beating heart, and stepping into the carriage just as the moon began to rise over the woods of the park, was soon conveyed with her mother and brother to Hawley. There all the splendor of modern riches, the lights, the servants, the beautiful dresses, the pompous rooms, were almost sufficient to overwhelm a young, and warm imagination. Trembling, and disconcerted she entered the drawing-room, where a large circle were already met; and the eyes of the gentlemen and the envy and sneers of the ladies were soon attracted by her figure. Sir Peter Lumm with all the triumph of irresistible conquest, now whispered complacently in the ear of some lady of quality, and now talked to Mary, as if to make her sensible of the honor of his notice. She, filled with disgust at his manners, was glad to be released from his disagreeable conversation, by the more gentle and insinuating attentions of Lord Molynes, who soon after she came into the room, took the opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with her.

At length the mists began to subside before her eyes, and she possessed herself sufficiently to examine the figures round the room; but her spirits sunk, when the ball began, and she could not perceive any where among the crowd the person of her favourite Woodvile. The music burst forth; and Lord Molynes took her out to dance. The lustre of her eyes softened by the melancholy of her mind, her graceful figure, and elegant dress, in the motion of the dance appeared enchanting. Lord Molynes was exquisitely pleased with her, and endeavoured with all the powers he possessed to interest her. In comparison with Sir Peter Lumm, whose jealousy began now to revive, and from whose impertinent conversation she often found him a protection, he appeared very agreeable to her. But still compared with Woodvile she thought him a being of an inferior order; and enjoyed no moments but those few, when retiring to a chair in a corner of the room, she might, while her eyes appeared to be engaged by the lively scene before her, indulge the sickness of her own heart.

The

The change of partners gave an opportunity, to most of the fashionable young men there, to vie with each other for her hand; but to her, the marked notice she received was troublesome, while her diffidence but heightened her charms. The admiration of the room inflamed the vanity, while it increased the jealousy, of Sir Peter, and his pursuit of Mary was redoubled, till, to release herself at one time from his tiresome importunities, she was glad to shew him the appearance of an earnest attention to the conversation of Lord Molyne, (though her mind was all the while wandering elsewhere,) when as the latter was expressing some very soft and high-flown compliment, and her eyes, which yet saw not, seemed turned with melancholy interest towards him, there walked hastily up the room, with pallid and enquiring looks, Woodvile himself, who just at the instant of passing her, saw Lord Molyne take her hand, and heard him say, "How exquisitely happy must be the man who possesses this!" to which he observed her, (absorbed in truth at that moment in her own thoughts, and

and not knowing to what she replied,) answer with a benignant smile. A thousand daggers through his heart could not have given him a greater agony than this. He endeavoured to suppress his feelings, and went on, but a half-muttered exclamation broke forth, which waked Mary from her reverie; who, as she turned round to look from whence the voice proceeded, was almost ready to faint, as she perceived the back of Woodvile, now departing through the farther door. Lord Molynes could not but observe, yet guessed not the cause of, her agitation, but as she complained of a sudden giddiness of her head, (for she thought she must have dropped,) administered salts and essences with the most tender assiduity. She soon however made a pretence to sit down, and the first opportunity on which she could get rid of her partner, wandered up the room in the hope of meeting Woodvile. Through three card-rooms did she pass in vain; and was now with a mournful heart returning to the dancing party, when as she was joining the crowd again, Woodvile passed her at a little distance.

distance without the least notice. This she thought strange indeed: she now feared she had been nourishing a passion, upon false grounds, and without the least hope of a return. "Yet if he felt no love for her, why should he feel anger? She used at least to enjoy his friendship." However she had no time for these reflections, for Sir Peter Lumm had found her out, and insisted on her again joining the dance with him: this however she absolutely declined, and went in search, as she thought, of her mother; and one of the dances breaking up, and the party flocking together into another room, she found herself in a crowd, where Lord Molynes perceiving it, was making way for her, when he brushed the coat of Woodvile, who, at the instant she found herself pressed against him, and before she could recover her agitation sufficiently to address him, darted a look of vengeance at them both, and then, pushing forward without uttering a word, was soon out of sight. The agonies of her heart were now with difficulty concealed; and she determined again if possible to search him out, and

and enquire for an explanation of this strange conduct. However with sickness at her bosom, and tears almost bursting into her eyes, she was obliged for a long while to hear the insipid nothings, that numerous suitors, attracted by her uncommon beauty, were buzzing around her.

Chance at length released her from a surrounding circle, and she again was moving through a crowd into another room, when, as fate would have it, she found her hand pressed against Woodvile's, at which its very pulses beat so, and its trembling was so perceptible, that Woodvile looking round, saw the countenance of Mary De-Clifford with eyes of such expression as no language can paint—and with a voice more tender than can be imagined, heard her pronounce the name of “Woodvile.” His eyes melted into ineffable sweetness, and in a low and trembling, yet energetic tone, he cried out involuntarily, as he seized her hand, “Angelic Mary!” She almost dropped: he led her through the crowd to a chair. Neither
for

for some moments spoke another word; but, as she appeared a little recovered, some clouds again seemed to pass over his eyes, and she softly said: "You are angry, Woodvile: you were not wont to be angry with your little pupil!" Again his eyes softened; and with indistinct articulation he cried, "Oh Mary, I am a fool, but that countenance would melt the anger of hell itself!" "Anger," she replied mournfully, "you are angry then indeed. You used to tell me I never could offend you, and" (sighing and hesitating,) "now, now, when I—I most—most—least would wish to be (she turned her eyes upon the ground, as they met his, and blushed) "disagreeable, I, alas! have raised your indignation"—"Oh! Mary, too dear Mary," he replied with tears in his eyes, "would that that fascinating, yet I fear too artful, voice, did not charm away an indignation, for which my senses alas! tell me I have too much cause!"—"Artful" she replied almost choked with her tears, "artful! cruel Woodvile, what can this moody humour mean?—"

“mean?—you have known me alas! from
“my childhood, Woodvile, and can you
“say”——“but that you are an angel
“Mary,” interrupted he, softened into exquisite love——“O Woodvile, if I could be angry,” (said she looking into his face with eyes of uncommon tenderness,) “but this
“weak bosom has nourished a—a—friendship—
“friendship for you, Woodvile, that has grown
“with my growth, and I never felt that I
“could be angry with Woodvile.” “Sweetest
“Mary!” replied he in extacy, and he was going on, but at that moment Mrs. De-Clifford with an angry countenance approached her daughter, (the agitation of whose looks was difficult to be concealed,) and interrupted any farther conversation—yet Woodvile, and Mary separated, each full of luxurious feelings, such as, though no language is equal to, is perhaps rather better expressed in the following Sonnet, than by any prose I can cloath it in.

SONNET.

S O N N E T.

Oh Love, requited Love, how fine thy thrills,
 That shake the trembling frame with extacy ;
 E'en every vein celestial pleasure thrills,
 And inexpressive bliss is in each sigh ;
 In the transc'd ear ærial music trills,
 Fairies enchanted radiance round supply,
 Nectar divine the magic cup distills,
 And heavenly figures dance before the eye :
 The dear adored Beauty, who in tears
 Seen thro' her smiles, has charm'd the Lover's
 woes,
 An Angel not of earthly mould appears,
 And spreads enchantment wheresoe'er she goes.
 Oh Heav'n, kind Heav'n, that joy like this
 would last ?
 But Bliss is not for earth ; clouds rise, the vision's past.

Mary, her whole frame vibrating with sensibility, felt not a little affected by the angry expression of her mother ; but with sighs and meekness joined the dance with Sir Peter Lumm, who had not passed unobserved the close conversation and mutual looks between her and Woodvile. Half elated by the splendor of his own ball, and half awed by his conscious inferiority in all personal qualities

K

to

to his rival, he one moment displayed to her the most insufferable self-conceit, and the next attacked her with the meanest jealousy; one while he aspired to obtain the beauty, whom it was the fashion to praise; and at another, when he surveyed her angelic countenance, or touched her delicate hand, sighed forth the compliments of unaffected admiration. In her his vanity and his passion raised an equal antipathy, which she found it difficult to suppress. But the countenance of her mother, who sat opposite to her, as she ascended the dance, operated on her as a continual monitor. Her eyes meanwhile stole now and then a glance at Woodvile, who sat lost in his own musings, except when his melancholy looks beaming ineffable sweetness were turned upon her. Then would he watch her down the dance, and once when she cast a look of peculiar tenderness on him, it filled him with such uncommon delight, that it instantly broke forth in one of those poetical effusions, by which he so frequently felt his heart, whether in grief or joy, lightened. For I know not why, Genius
feldom

feldom experiences the pressure of any images of great pleasure, any of its wild creations, or those overflowings of the soul, which are its characteristic attendants, without an instant desire to cloath its fancies in language, and perpetuate the picture, with which it is so fascinated. So it was that Woodvile now committed his rapture, as he caught Mary's expressive eyes, in the following lines to paper.

SONNET.

Beam not on me—those heavenly looks, sweet maid,
 Beam not on me, lest lost in bliss I die!—
 Still as that angel-figure I survey'd
 Down the glad dance in graceful motion fly;
 Those flowing ringlets on thy neck display'd;
 That lovely bosom heave the trembling sigh;
 Those twinkling feet that 'neath thy garments
 play'd,
 Celestial beauty met my raptur'd eye.
 But oh! those tender glances pierce my soul
 With melting pleasures too intense to bear;
 In vain I would my bursting tears controul,
 And calm the tremblings that my bosom tear.
 —Oh, sweetest Mary, spare the liquid fire,
 Those hallow'd glances dart, or I expire!

What were Mary's sensations, when she read these lines, written with the pencil of Woodvile, who took the earliest opportunity of putting them into her hands! Yet the importunities of Sir Peter Lumm, the assiduous attentions of Lord Molynes, and the watchful looks of Mrs. De-Clifford, gave her but few opportunities of conversing with him. The morning had risen long before the ball ended, and she was delighted to contemplate at intervals the early dawn over the distant downs, and twice with expressive melancholy pointed out to Woodvile a glimpse by the misty light of the park at Woodlands. To his fancy a hint like this raised a thousand tender and delightful images, and he looked with eyes of idolatry on her illumined countenance. Yet the interruptions of Lord Molynes were by fits painful to him, and the mixture of folly, vanity, and pride in the continual addresses of Sir Peter Lumm, filled him with such contempt and indignation, that Mary sometimes was alarmed with the expectation of an open quarrel
between

between them, which she entreated him to avoid.

During this time De-Clifford, to whom his mother had now communicated neither her fears nor her hopes regarding her daughter, watched with tender solicitude the looks and the behaviour of his beloved sister, and was delighted to perceive towards the close of the evening, the revived spirits, and almost inspired countenance of his bosom-friend Woodvile, whose strange conduct towards him as well as to other people, he had observed with much concern on his first entry at Hawley.

At length the broadness of day-light reminded the company it was time to disperse, and the De-Clifford family were soon carried back through the morning mists to Woodlands, where Mary soon hastened to her own apartment in which, though some harsh taunts she had received in her way home from her mother gave her some pain, she composed herself to sleep, and lost some

hours in the most luxurious dreams. All night the music vibrated in her ear, and the form and voice of Woodvile were present to her mind.

Woodvile retired to a neighbouring inn, whence the next day he returned to Grafton, where he found his mother and sisters happy again to receive him, and the sighs and blushes of Emily Barnard betray more than language could speak. Yet one object engrossed his whole soul, and to him all others were now at best insipid. The raptures of Hawley now of course in some measure subsided; and though there still thrilled thro' his frame a tenderness increased rather than diminished, yet on the reflection of a variety of unpleasant circumstances in his affairs, which Grafton recalled to his mind, his attachment was mixed with a melancholy, that tintured his looks, his thoughts, and his amusements. The gloomy season of the year seemed suited to the present temper of his soul, and the tumultuous winds that often in eddies stripped the trees
of

of the forest, and the deep and dark rains, that sometimes fell for hours together, appeared to soothe him. He loved to sit after dinner, when the ladies had left him, in the dark old dining-room, still darkened with an hundred portraits of warriors and statesmen, with eyes often fixed upon the fire, as twilight was coming on, and by fits catching a view of some of the opening recesses of the forest, while the storms that whistled round the towers, and among the battlements, formed a noble concert for him. One day, while he was enjoying this scene, Emily Barnard made an errand into the room; he was so lost in his own thoughts, that she had almost approached his chair, before he perceived her; it was then impossible to avoid some conversation with her. "I am sorry I have disturbed your musings, Mr. Woodvile," said she sighing; "but you are always musing, I think, you are the most melancholy man, I know."—"I am sorry for it, ma'am," replied he, a little confused. "I wonder what makes you so thoughtful;" continued she, stooping down to pick up something
on

on the carpet, and displaying, just as a flame catching in the fire shone distinctly upon it, a most beautiful bosom, "women, you know, always are curious creatures."—"Shall I make you my confidante," answered he a little more livelily, caught with her figure—"Oh no," said she with a sigh and a blush, "I am sure you would not tell me truth, and then laugh at me for believing you."—"Why so, Miss Barnard?"—"Because,—because," replied she a little hesitating, "because gentlemen love to deceive." (By this time she was standing up by one side of the fire-place with her head leaning on her arm against the marble,) "You seem to speak feelingly, Miss Barnard," said he somewhat archly—"Alas! Mr. Woodvile," (and then she sighed from the very bottom of her heart) "alas, Mr. Woodvile, I know not why I should be the object of your jests."—"Jests, my dear Miss Barnard," cried he, snatching her hand, as her lovely arm hung gracefully down on the side next him, and pressing it, "I am ill inclined, my dear Miss Barnard, to jest." As he spoke these words,

words, she dropped on his knee, and while, as she leant against him to support herself, he felt her bosom beat as if it would burst its confines, she mournfully and with downcast eyes cried, "Dear Miss Barnard,—Woodvile, I have not been accustomed to that sound; alas! Woodvile (it avails not that I attempt to conceal it,) would that I were indeed dear to you!"—"Dear to me," replied he, (overcome with her tender voice, and the extreme luxury of her person, which the accidental ebullition of another flame in the fire again displayed full to his sight,) "Is it possible the beauty of my lovely Emily should not be dear to me!" As he spoke, he pressed her white hand to his lips, but at that moment the hallowed image of Mary De-Clifford crossed his mind, and he felt an agony at the thought of profaning the purity of his attachment to her. How great then was the present conflict of his passions! The lovely person of Emily Barnard in his arms sighing out her soul in tenderness to him, crossed by the recollection of the angelic purity of Mary De-Clifford, to whom his whole heart

heart was devoted! "Woodvile," continued Emily, "forgive the weakness that has thus
"put me in your power, and remember that
"it is for you only, I could ever have felt
"the passion, by which I could so forget
"myself; triumph not therefore, dearest
"Woodvile, over my folly—nor"——
"Alas, Emily," interrupted he, in a tumult
of passions, "if this tortured heart had not
"already"—(a ray of light betrayed the pal-
lid change of her countenance, and he felt
her soft hand, which was locked in his, grow
cold,) "if this tortured heart had not al-
"ready, ere it was blest with the sight of
"thee, vowed eternal attachment to ano-
"ther, then had I"——"Then had you
"not been false, cruel Woodvile, to Emily
"Barnard!" cried she, in a mixed agony of
anger and affection. "But oh, still dear,
"tho' cruel Woodvile" (softening the tone
of her voice, while her frame continued trem-
bling under his arm that supported her, and
the liquid lustre of her large eyes was mourn-
fully turned on him) "when this sad heart
"shall cease to beat, as it soon must do,
"thou

“ thou wilt yet with tenderness attend me to
“ my grave, and cherish the memory of that
“ passion, at which this melting bosom
“ laughed, till it sighed for thee !” She then
dropped her head upon his shoulder, and
sobbed almost audibly, while he, not less
overcome, laid his cheek to hers, and mix-
ing with hers his tears, felt a struggle of pas-
sions, which might have drawn forth expres-
sions, that it was happy, considering his at-
tachment to Mary De-Clifford, that the inter-
ruption of a summons to tea prevented.

The countenances of both harrassed by
their feelings betrayed to the penetrating eye
of Elinor Woodvile that something very in-
teresting had passed. Yet she guessed not
what. The softened melancholy of Emily,
whose chearful manners were formerly the
life of the company, affected her; and the
moody conduct of her brother, sometimes
all softness, and by fits petulant and restless,
gave her still more pain. The wind, that
had been high all day, was now risen to a
tempest; it was dismal dark; and the rain
came

came down by fits in deluges; and though it was now the middle of November, loud claps of thunder at times mixed themselves with the storms; and shook the castle, as if it would fall. Woodvile enjoyed this, and saw as he looked out of the window, frequently by the flashes of the lightning the waters of the moat disturbed, and now and then, as a broader flash came, all the branches of the forest in an eddy; but there was such an hollow sound at times along the numerous dark passages and large uninhabited apartments of this old mansion, as made the blood of the ladies continually run cold.

During this awful scene he broke forth in the following poetical soliloquy.

Proud towers of faded glory, that of yore
The pelting of the storms with mockery bore!
Why shake you this? Has Time at length fulfill'd
The space allotted you, and do you yield?
Ye awful spirits, that with dismal shriek
Ride in the whirlwind, (ye can tell me,) speak!
Thro' yon dark rooms why does the hollow gale
With such a mournful whistling seem to wail?

Methinks

Methinks the lightnings flash, and thunders roll
To suit the moody madness of my soul !
If these portentous signals come to close
In Woodvile's heir the race of Woodvile's woes,
And calm at length the weakly-struggling aim
Of the last dregs of Grafton's House, for Fame,
(That House, that long bad upstart Envy pine
To view it with increasing splendor shine,)
Glad I embrace them, for they could not find
A moment more congenial to my mind !
Long have I liv'd to bear the sad disgrace
While new-born villains trod in Merit's place ;
Seen Honor's seat to modest Right denied,
While thick with knaves and fools it was supplied ;
Seen rapid Wealth, in blood and carnage won,
Sport its undaunted splendors to the sun,
While with surrounding pomp it still beguiles
The meek claim that it robs, of courteous smiles.
Yes, ye lov'd ancient towers, your day is past ;
Around your walls no Eastern riches cast
Their circling glory ; nor with glorious sheene
Of glittering diamonds deck your master's mien.
Blow then, ye tempests, let the turrets quake !—
Yet, louder, deep as the foundations shake !—
But hark ! methinks, again that hollow moan !
My spirit sinks beneath its plaintive tone !
O thou, for whom my lingering wishes crave
A few short years, ere yet they meet the grave,
Whose angel beauty wakes such pure desires,
As ne'er were mingled with unhallowed fires,
O let my mind be calm'd, as sinks the storm,
By the sweet image of thy heavenly form !

L

But

But oh! sweet Emily, new conflicts rise,
While falling tears bedew those tender eyes!
Can I renew the image I survey'd,
Can I recall that milk-white breast display'd.
Beating for me, and yet not feel a flame
That injures Mary, thrill throughout my frame?
O whither can I fly, and what new woes
Wait hapless Woodvile wheresoe'er he goes,
For ne'er can earthly charms the hallow'd love
For heavenly Mary's purest form remove!

C H A P. V.

MARY De-Clifford was during this time indulging her imagination at Woodlands, and dwelling with delight on the thoughts of her last interview with Woodvile. But the conversation of her mother, with whose sentiments she had never felt a perfect sympathy, seemed now in its whole tendency to give her pain, and she found relief alone, (except when she could enjoy the unrestrained conversation of her brother,) in her own musings, or in the scenery around her. For whatever some people, who want sensibility and fancy, or who have had their early taste suppressed by an education in crowded cities, may suppose, there is a genuine pleasure in the scenes of nature, which

affociates itself with all our joys, and all our woes, which heightens the former, and tinctures the latter with a melancholy smile. Even in the cold and naked month of December, the leafless branches of the trees, the dead hedges, the brown grass covered with dew, and the dark uncloathed earth, on which the plough is moving, have their charms, increased by contrast, and doubly pleasing from variety. Could Mary cease to amuse her thoughtful hours in this way? No: she walked out to idolize every spot, in which during the last delightful autumn she had seen Woodvile; to mark with pensive regret how the winter winds had changed it; and to renew a luxury of frame, which the severity of her mother made but more dear to her.

It was, I think, the second of December, that the morning was unusually bright, and through the dewy air, appeared with peculiar beauty; the sun shone through the branches of the leafless trees, which looked almost transparent; and there was a stillness, which
gave

gave effect to every rural sound. Mary strolled down to the farm, which was in a retired corner of the park, and there seating herself on the trunk of a tree lately felled, watched at times the progress of a labourer, who was familiar to her, as he new-made the adjoining hedge, and enjoyed the fragrance of the soil that the plough was turning up, while the woodman at work, on the side hill across the valley which was before her, caused an echo truly romantic, and her eyes were often engaged at the sight of the uplifted axe, that was ready to strike again before the sound of the former stroke had reached her ear. Her exquisite sensibility was so awake to all rural images, that they put to flight any lingering uneasiness of mind, and for the time she felt nothing but unmingled happiness. In these scenes her romantic fancy painted to her Woodvile in such colours as never invested a human being, and tears sometimes of rapture and sometimes of tenderness frequently rose in her eyes. A neat cottage such as she saw before her would, she thought, be Elisium with him, and then with
such

such scenes as now surrounded her, what could the world furnish to raise her envy?

When she had indulged her contemplations in this way till her spirits were almost spent, she took out a little volume of Milton's Poems, which she almost always carried in her pocket, and was running over again the *L'Allegro* with more than common delight, when an arm stretched over her shoulder seized the book from her hands, and looking round she saw Peter Lumm, who, with a bow and arch smile, made an apology for the intrusion, which by no means satisfied Mary. "At your studies, Miss De-Clifford!" said he,—"Yes, Sir," replied she drily, yet a blush was on her cheek, and confusion in her eyes.—"Love-verses,—I hope," continued he, and then turning his sight upon the book, and reading, *The Poems of John Milton*—"ah," he cried, "I thought so,—Milton writes good love-verses; I used to read him myself once—but is this some new poem of his; or has he not published any very lately?"—"Sir!" answered

swered she, with astonishment, as if she could not believe her ears.—“ Oh, don't now, my
“ dear Mary, affect to be so ignorant of these
“ things, I dare say you are acquainted
“ with every poet in the language, who has
“ written on love; you have not been brought
“ up to like this romantic solitude for no-
“ thing.” —“ It is you, Sir, I believe who
“ affect to be ignorant, but” (with an ex-
pression of contempt which she could not suppress) “ it is fashionable, I suppose.”—
A glimmering of recollection now struck him that he had committed some blunder, and he replied “ Oh yes, my dear Mary,
“ what man of rank would own that he read
“ any other book than the Newmarket Calen-
“ dar,—unless indeed it was the book of
“ your divine countenance” staring in her face, till through perfect distress, she turned away her eyes, at which putting his arm round her waist he stole an instant kiss. Mary surprized, agonized, and almost melting into tears, turned towards him with a look of haughty anger, such as her countenance had never before expressed, and
while

while the mean coward was daunted with the expression of her fiery eyes, she cried, "Cruel, and insulting wretch, are these the liberties, with which you treat, because unprotected you dare them, the sister of De-Clifford! Is this the respect with which I am to be treated, and even in sight of my brother's peasants! Know, Sir, since the necessity of the occasion brings it forth, that I have long despised, and that I now hate you! And that never, never again shall you dare to profane this hand with your unhallowed touch!" — She then rose from her seat, and was hastening home.

Sir Peter, thunderstruck with the spirit of this rebuke, which he so little expected from the gentle Mary, sat for some moments motionless, but soon recovering himself, recollecting his own consequence, remembering what he had seen and heard of the coquetry of women, and not able to distinguish between real and affected anger, he pursued, and overtook her. "Miss De-Clifford," said he, "I hope you will excuse." —
"Certainly,

“Certainly, Sir,” replied she with spirit,
“I shall excuse nothing.”—“Only the ex-
“cess of my admiration, ma’am, hurried
“me”——“Your folly and insolence,
“Sir,” (interrupting him again) “hurried
“you to an act, you may have reason to re-
“pent!”——“Oh, do not affect, my
“dearest Mary,” attempting to seize her
hand again.——“This is too much,
“Sir,” hurrying on.—“Oh if you did but
“know,”—replied he (affecting a soft voice)
“the pangs of my heart—Oh! suffer me to
“lay my fortune and my life at your feet!”
——“Sir,” (cried she in a firmer tone) “do
“you mean to add fresh insults to those you
“have already given me by this unmeaning
“nonsense!”——“Nonsense, madam! I assure
“you, I was never more in earnest in my
“life!”——“Nor was I then Sir” (added
she) “than when I say, that had you a thou-
“sand times your fortune, and ten thousand
“times the qualities upon which you most
“pride yourself, I would sooner work for my
“daily bread, than be your wife!”

It

It was impossible for him to misunderstand the severity of this speech. His anger rose, yet the perturbation of her countenance gave new beauty to her looks, and his desires were more than ever inflamed. “Infatuated girl,” cried he, “this comes of reading romances; you suppose I know not your prepossessions!” — “Prepossessions,” cried she, alarmed and colouring, “what do you mean Sir?” — “I mean, madam, your attachment to Woodvile” (spitefully and through his teeth.) — “I know not, Sir, what pretence you have for saying so; but were it true, to you, Sir, I am not accountable for my affections, and my heart at least would be bestowed on” — “one who does not deserve it,” (interrupted he,) “one who at this moment is wasting his smiles on another!” — She turned pale, hesitated, bit her lips, but by an effort almost of despair recovered spirit enough to say with energy, “Were the actions, Sir, of Mr. Woodvile, of as much consequence to me as you pretend, I must at least have better authority for such assertions, before they

“ they would give me any pain;”—and then hurried on as fast as she could, to hide her returning emotion; while Sir Peter, stung with the contempt of this speech, was for some moments silent.

At the stepping stile from the farm into the park, he again came up with her; there her extreme delicacy made her involuntarily hesitate for some moments before she ascended. The exquisite beauty of her person, which he had once more an opportunity of contemplating, again conquered his anger; for his passion for Mary was really as deep as his heart was capable of. “ Oh hear me,” he cried, “ Miss De-Clifford yet hear me,”—she hastened over the stile. “ Your mother “ at least listens to me.”—“ My mother, “ Sir!” alarmed and pallid,—“ have you “ been mean enough then to anticipate my “ mother’s influence? In any thing but this “ Sir, my mother’s wishes shall be equal to “ commands!”—“ Mean, Miss De-Clifford! “ I do not comprehend you; my fortune at “ least, my rank, my connections,”—“ Oh “ yes,

“yes,” interrupted she, “oh yes Sir, I doubt
“them not; but my dull understanding”—
“thinks they all fade” (continued he insolently) “before pride and poverty among
“the ruins of Grafton!”—“Had you not
“before, Sir, been odious to me” (calling forth all the energy of her voice to articulate through her rising tears) “arrogance like
“this had never won my heart; but I have
“not, Sir, inherited the blood of the De-
“Cliffords without long knowing, that there is
“more pride and insolence in one house of
“new-got wealth, than in all the ancient families of England together!” With this speech she exhausted all her heroism, and burst into a flood of tears.

Sir Peter fullen with affronted pride seemed to feel his revenge gratified by her weeping, and coldly took his leave; but he had left daggers in the heart of Mary, which now, in her lonely walk across the park home, had full time to rankle. The brightness of the day was now passed; mists were rising everywhere round her, and it seemed as if the
close

close of evening was hastily approaching. She took out her watch, and found it was half past four o'clock; she hastened on, for she yet had a long way to walk, and she feared she should be late at dinner, which she particularly wished to avoid to day, for she had no courage in her present humour to encounter the frowns of her mother. On she walked, sometimes sighing, and sometimes in tears, while the shades of night were gathering fast around her; and the rooks were returning in immense flocks to the woods. The dews fell fast; and the bottoms of her petticoats that swept the grass seemed wet almost as if dipped in water, while her thin silk stockings but ill protected her most slender and beautiful ancles from the damp: a drizzling rain began to fall before she reached the house; and with difficulty did she find time to change her dress before she heard the summons for dinner.

She hurried down into the eating room, and found only her brother already there, leaning against the chimney-piece over a blazing

blazing fire. The contrast between this and the driving shower without, was very chearful, and the brightness of the flames seemed to illumine the colours of the fine painted glass, that totally filled the oriel window. Mary's spirits rose, and her fancy was awakened; yet the redness of her eyes could not in a moment be dissipated. "Mary, my love," said De-Clifford tenderly, (taking her sweet hand that was yet cold,) "where have you been? Your eyes look red, as if you had been in tears?"—"Oh dear, no;" said she as chearfully as she could, "it is the wind I believe; I have been taking a long walk; and was caught in the rain, besides being almost belated!" "Your hand feels chilly, you seem to shake" (continued he) "I hope, dear girl, you have caught no cold!"—"Oh no," (replied she) "but I met that odious" ——— at that moment her mother entered the room, and she was silent, tho' the enquiring countenance of De-Clifford, notwithstanding he said nothing, expressed his curiosity.

They

They sat down to table; and no particular conversation took place during dinner. The servants were gone; the rain was beating against the windows, and Mary, who felt herself very cold, had taken a chair by the fire, during the soothing shades of twilight, and had kept her eyes fixed on it, to indulge the more unnoticed in her own reflections, when Mrs. De-Clifford, who had for some time sat silent, addressed her son, and said: "Well, George, I suppose I
 "may wish you joy?"—"Joy—of what,
 "Ma'am?" said he in surprize—"Oh
 "dear, you know perfectly well—so do not
 "pretend"—"Pretend, ma'am!—I assure you
 "I cannot guess."---By this time Mary was
 waked from her reverie, and felt her curiosity excited; she therefore looked up with
 expectation.---"Why, of your friend, Wood-
 "vile's marriage!"---(Mary felt a sickness
 at heart, and turned her eyes, into which the
 tears rose, upon the fire)---"Marriage
 "ma'am! with whom, pray, and when?"---
 "Oh, I do not mean, it has already taken
 "place, but you know very well, it very
 M 2 "soon

“soon will, with Emily Barnard.” —
“Emily Barnard, ma’am! I never heard her
“name; you must mistake surely!” — “Oh
“yes, George, a merchant’s daughter, a
“great fortune, and a very fine girl; I am
“very glad of it, and I think he could not
“do better” (glancing a side look at Mary,
who had already twice half-risen to leave the
room, and twice sat down again through
an indistinct curiosity of she knew not what,)
“I am glad that he at last can shew a little
“common sense; for I know not what in a
“short time would become of the haughty
“towers of Grafton, without a little aid
“from that counter, which you both of
“you so foolishly despise!” — “Without
“entering, ma’am, into any argument about
“the prudence of the scheme, I think you
“must have been misinformed of the fact;
“for, besides the improbability arising from
“the peculiar character of Woodvile, I can-
“not believe it, because I assure you he has
“never given me the slightest hint of it” —
(here Mary’s sweet eyes glanced upon her
brother, and beaming with tender thank-
fulness,

fulness, seemed to utter blessings on him ;) “ what source of information therefore can you have for such a report ? ” — “ Oh, authority undoubted, George ; I can say no more at present, but you will certainly find it true ! ” — Here again she turned her cruel and enquiring eyes at Mary, who by this time had risen from her seat, and was hastening out of the room, though her trembling legs could scarce support her, and she burst into a flood of tears before she reached her own room.

Mrs. De-Clifford now sat thoughtful, and silent ; the “ stricken deer ” was fled, and she had no farther aim in her conversation. Her son in a confusion of ideas, though he wished much for an explanation, was yet fearful to touch upon the subject again. Thus they passed at least half an hour, when Mrs. De-Clifford retired, and in a few minutes, De-Clifford took the opportunity of going to enquire after his sister, whose agitation, as she left the room, he could not but discern. He found her in her own apartment, with

her head supported by her arm, hanging, lost in thought, over the fire. "Dear Mary, "you are not well," said he tenderly. "I "have only a little head-ache, brother," replied she, "I believe I walked too far to "day."—"What can I do to relieve you, "Mary; I fear you have caught cold" continued he.—"Dear, dearest brother!" answered she, with the softest energy, kissing his hand, on which her tears dropped—"Mary I cannot bear this; I cannot bear to "see you unhappy? what, for heaven sake, "tell me, what is the matter?"—"Oh "sweetest, most beloved brother," (scarce able to speak through her tears,) "do not, "do not break my heart with your tenderness!" And at that instant she hid her face against his shoulder, and sobbed aloud. "Mary," cried he, in an agony of alarm, "my best, my most angelic Mary, speak! "Good Heaven, what can affect you?"—"Oh I cannot—brother, I am not well, and "then your kindness, when my mother has "looked so angry with me!"—"Angry, "Mary; you must mistake, my sweet sister; "she

“ she cannot be angry with you ; nobody can
“ be angry with you ! ” — “ Oh ! ” cried she
mournfully, “ Would that others were but
“ half as tender as you are ; and then — “ Oh,
“ Mary, talk not so mysteriously to me of
“ unhappiness ; open that affectionate heart
“ to me, and trust ” “ to find the goodness
“ of an angel, my beloved brother ! ” hiding
her head again against his shoulder, “ but
“ yet I know not why I dare not ” — at that
moment Mrs. De-Clifford entered the room,
and her son telling her of Mary’s head-ache,
her agitated looks passed without bringing
forth any observations of her mother, which
both the brother and sister dreaded.

Mary was left in her own apartment, and
Mrs. De-Clifford and her son had just reached
the drawing-room and seated themselves
at the tea-table, when a carriage with four
post-horses stopped at the door, and in a few
minutes the servant announced Mr. FITZ-
HERBERT, a friend whom De-Clifford had
known abroad, and who, passing this way,
determined to take the opportunity of spend-
ing

ing a few days at Woodlands, a place he had never yet seen. De-Clifford was sincerely glad to see him; and as his person and manners were apparently those of a man of fashion, he was received by his mother with much graciousness; - Mary, making her headache an excuse, did not appear that evening.

FITZHERBERT was a man of very ancient family, and good fortune. Abilities elegant, if not vigorous, feelings exquisitely susceptible, and a pensive turn of mind, addicted to literature and the arts, had not altogether preserved him from the voluptuousness of the age. This gave a tincture of extravagance sometimes to his ideas. Yet if his actions had not been always untainted, his heart at least had lost nothing of its refinement.

The whole air of the House of Woodlands delighted his fancy from his first entry in it; but he sat with some impatience the first hour or two for the introduction of Mary, of whose beauty he had lately heard
a great

a great deal. He found however at length that he must wait till the morning for that pleasure.

The next morning Mary entered the breakfast room, and Fitzherbert, not at all disappointed in his expectations, was all attention to her. There was something very interesting and full of sentiment in his conversation, which engaged Mary's notice, and induced her, knowing the state of her own heart, to treat him with an innocent familiarity, which whiled away two or three days as pleasantly, as Mary in her present turn of mind could expect. Fitzherbert was delighted with his visit, and wrote the following account of it in letters to a Friend.

LETTER

L E T T E R I.

To The Hon^{ble}. Mr. B——.

“ Woodlands, Dec. 6, 1790.

“ My dear Friend,

“ **I** Believe I hinted to you, when we parted, my intention if I could find a few days to spare, of paying a visit to my friend De-Clifford at Woodlands, which I had never hitherto had an opportunity of doing. I now write from his house, where I have been amply recompensed for coming out of my way; and am particularly happy in the introduction to his mother, and beautiful sister.

“ The house, though not large, is very venerable from its antiquity. You are something

thing of an antiquarian as well as myself; and therefore will comprehend, and even with a description somewhat minute. The front has two projecting wings, crowned with battlements and pinnacles; and in the middle is a large tower or gateway, much higher than the rest, and having fixed against it a large clock, whose bell is heard all over the park. In this, up a few steps, is placed the large and maffy door, which seems coeval with the building, and leads into the skreens, on the left side of which are the buttery-hatch, and doors into various offices; and on the right, the entry into the hall, which is very lofty, being the height of two stories, with a raftered roof; a gallery over the skreens fronted with a profusion of carved oak, black with age; and long narrow windows, perfectly Gothic, and of a loftiness proportionate to the room, which in the outside add to the variety of the front. These are full of painted glass, containing all the alliances of the family, with names and dates under many of them. Opposite the recess window, at the further end of the high-table, which

which is of massive oak, is the opening that leads into the area, where is the stair case, and the door into the eating-parlour, which is in the south wing. The windows here also are full of painted glass, and the room is hung as thick as possible with family portraits, one or two of which seem to be as old and as capital as the age and style of Holbein; and here are others by Mireveldt, Cornelius Jansen, Vandyke, Hanneman, and Sir Peter Lely. The stair-case seems of a date much posterior to the building; it is one of those heavy structures, with enormous wooden steps and massy balusters, which characterize the reign of Elizabeth. On its walls hang a few heads on board, very rude and ancient; two or three whole-length portraits, too long for the other rooms; and an ancient piece or two of Battles, (apparently those fought in France, in the reign of Hen. VIII.) which though they do not seem very well painted, struck me as curious from the dresses, the armour, and the buildings of the times, which they have probably exactly preserved. The drawing-room,

room, which is over the eating-parlour, is hung with tapestry, not less curious than the rest of the furniture of the house. De-Clifford, with the extraordinary accomplishments of whose mind, as well as his heart, you are acquainted, places all his pride in these things, and much against the inclination of his mother, preserves them with the most religious care.

“ The park, in which this fine old mansion stands, is a scene of nature, so grand, that my imagination despairs of giving even a faint idea of it. No marks of former inclosures ; no traces of art are to be seen in it ; the spade, the scythe, and the axe seem never to have touched it. Ancient trees, that appear cotemporary with the Conquest, are scattered wildly in every part. A wonderful variety in the shape of the grounds ; wild dells, entangled with thorns, and brushwood ; elevated spots, fed by numerous sheep ; and a winding valley that crosses the front at a little distance, with a hill rising gradually very high, and cloathed with a

vast wood, that forms the horizon, are some of the traits of these enchanting scenes.

“Then as to the inhabitants of this sweet retirement;—some of them at least are still more delightful. De-Clifford’s character you know, and agree with me he is one of the most amiable young men, you ever heard of. But Mary De-Clifford, his sister, I do think is the most beautiful creature, that ever trod upon the earth; even more beautiful than my imagination could conceive; and you know that faculty of mine is not apt to be behind-hand on such subjects. Yet I assure you I am not in love; many circumstances concur to prevent that. She is not yet very tall, but then she is not, I believe, much more than sixteen. Her complexion is exquisitely fair, and her hair a light auburn, of the most soft and silky gloss you can imagine, curling about her forehead, and her neck, which as well as her delicate bosom, is the most white and finest formed I ever saw; there is a slight tinge of colour on

on her cheeks, and the thinness of her skin, through which the blue veins continually appear, gives an uncommon animation to her complexion. Her eyes, which generally have a pensive look, are a dark blue, and are all intelligence. There is the most graceful and perfect symmetry in her shape; her angles are slowness itself; but the roundness of her whole frame, her snowy arms, her little tender hands, nothing less than painting can give a tolerable idea of: her voice is as charming as her form, and tho' she talks but little, there is something so extraordinary in what she says, uttered too by such a form, that sometimes almost,

“ I take it for a faery vision

“ Of some gay creature of the element,

“ That in the colours of the rainbow lives,

“ And plays i' th' plighted clouds. I am awe-
“ struck,

“ And as I pass, I worship.”*

“ To speak plain prose, I really thought it impossible for human nature to be capable of such unmingled pleasure, as I receive from the contemplation of this angelic Being.

* Comus, V. 298.

For, as I told you, I am not in love, and my delight therefore is unmixed with any of those fears, jealousies, and pains, which attend that unhappy passion. There is an innocent ease about her, that seems (perhaps with little credit to my vanity,) to treat me as a friend or a brother, and I often take her soft and beautiful hand, and sometimes even kiss it, without raising any foolish airs of prudery about her, while there is a sanctity about her person, that, beyond that of any other girl I ever saw, would awe away the thought of any improper liberty. There is sometimes a melancholy about her, that though it is excessively interesting, yet often affects, and gives me real pain. I believe she feels this sympathy, and that it makes her fond of my company; for though she always discovers a most elegant and enlightened mind, there is something often so very mournful in her sentiments, that it draws the tears into my eyes; and she seems now and then half inclined to utter things, in which she yet checks herself through fear, and asks questions, about which, though I do not see their tendency,

tendency, it is very evident she feels a very lively concern. I have some suspicion that her tender heart is already interested about some object, with whom I am unacquainted, and that even this divine creature doubts a return of affection. Oh! if I could discover that any one could use this sweet angel ill, I would myself, (such innocent affection do I already feel for her,) strike a dagger through his base and treacherous bosom.

“Adieu, for the present. My letter is already too long.

Your's most sincerely,

Anthony Fitzherbert.”

LETTER II.

“ Woodlands, Dec. 8, 1790.

“ My dear Friend,

“ I Feel particular pleasure in pouring out upon paper to you the scenes, with which this visit continues to fill my fancy. The character of the hospitable owner of this romantic seat is in such exact coincidence with its style, that I receive a double pleasure from that circumstance. He seems to be the soul that enlivens all these lifeless images of ancient days. His perfect acquaintance with all the spirit and essence of English History and Biography, with every part of which his family seems more or less connected, and his happy and unassuming manner of relating it, raises such an attention to these old towers, and these almost speaking

speaking portraits of Beauty and Valour, which seem to be bursting from the walls, that one often fancies oneself present in the courts of the TUDORS, and the STUARTS.

“ His sweet behaviour and affection to his sister is still more pleasing; and the tender returns he receives from her bestow undoubtedly a full recompence on him. We walk out together even in this wintry weather, and I am charmed with the sensibility of her remarks on the scenes of nature. I know not whether she has ever ventured to write any thing, but there is so much imagination in her language that I often think her a Poetess. But still her favourite images are all melancholy, and when I leave her to herself, she relapses into silence, and I often observe the tears in her eyes. I gaze on her frequently with an admiration I cannot express, and I fear my countenance has once or twice too much betrayed my delight, for her glance in those moments caught mine, and she coloured and grew pale by turns, and

and seemed to feel unfeigned distress, and though she would not be angry, yet appeared to reproach me with breaking the sanctity of friendship, and continued more reserved for some time afterwards. At least so I interpreted what passed in her mind, having taken up the idea of her attachment to another, which I supposed she thought profaned by such an expression of my looks.

“Her brother carried me to day, when she was walking, to see her little library. It is in the great tower over the gateway, and has a window of which the upper parts also are much darkened with painted glass. It commands a fine view of that part of the park, which lies in front of the house. I should guess she had caught a love of antiquity from her brother; for under a book, which lay on the table, and which I accidentally took up, there were the broken parts of a pane of painted glass carefully put together. It had two coats of arms impaled; and I had the curiosity to examine them; one was evidently that of De-Clifford; the other was more broken,

broken, but seemed to be, a *silver field charged with a red fess and a canton conjoined*; and underneath was written:

De Clyfforde and W = = d = i = = e.

MCCCCXXEIII.

I do not immediately recollect what this broken name is, to which these arms belong, though they are very familiar to me. I asked De-Clifford, but after looking a few moments on them, he turned the subject, I fancied in some confusion, and I forbore to pursue it. The book that covered it contained *Memoirs of the reign of Edward IV. and his court*, and was folded down in several places, but I thought it impertinent to look any farther into it. There were all the best Poets, whose works are not mixed with impurity on her shelves; and Mrs. SMITH's delightful *History of The Orphan of the Castle*, lay on her table, and seemed often to have been wet with her tears. I mention these little circumstances to shew the turn of mind of this beautiful and romantic girl.

“ Sir

“ Sir Peter Lumm dined here to day; he is a neighbour of very large fortune, but a stupid, vulgar, vain, low-born fellow. I wonder how De-Clifford can bear his acquaintance. I had however heard his mother speak with some interest and significance of him, and had thence some slight suspicion before I saw him, that he might be the happy man, who possessed the heart of Miss De-Clifford. I was therefore determined to watch the behaviour of both. I was disgusted with him as soon as he entered the room, and before he had been long there felt a contempt for him I could scarce repress shewing. “ Ah!” thought I, “ sweet Mary, “ what avail that exquisite taste, and those divine accomplishments, if they do not choose “ a more worthy object of affection, than “ this!” But the anger, and even haughtiness with which she treated him, (a haughtiness, I did not before think she could have experienced,) soon convinced me of my error. Though it was evident that the behaviour of the daughter ill accorded with the wishes of the mother.

To-

To-morrow we are to visit the small old church, which stands close on the north side of the House. A future Letter shall give you a description of it.

Your's sincerely,

Anthony Fitzherbert."

LET.

LETTER III.

“ Woodlands, Dec. 10, 1790.

“ My dear Friend,

“ I Think I have discovered the happy man, to whom the heart of this little angelic beauty is engaged.

We visited the church this morning, according to our intention. It is so rich and gloomy, and contains so much of the gorgeous splendor of more pompous days, and an incident or two so interesting passed there, that I am exquisitely delighted with our morning's employment. The vaulted roof of carved woodwork, adorned with roses, acorns, and other figures of burnished gold, interspersed with the arms, crests, badges, and cognizances, of the Cliffords, and their alliances,

alliances, shew at once, at whose expence that part of the building was erected. All the windows are, without any breach whatever, adorned with the most beautiful painted glafs, many 'parts of which are principally arms, but scripture stories are in others intermixed; and figures, very large, of warriors and women in rich dresses, their surcoats and mantles covered with all the pompous badges of chivalry, often in the attitude of prayer, beseech you to *say a pater-noster for their souls*. It put me something in mind of our old family church at NOR-BURY;* you remember there

“ The storied windows richly dight
Casting a dim religious light.”

You remember also the epitaph on my ancestor, the old Judge, † and the numerous beautiful altar-tombs, and memorials of our family, with which it is adorned. But

* In Derbyshire. *Editor.*

† Undoubtedly he alludes to the famous Judge, Sir Anthony Fitzherbert in the reign of Hen. VIII, whose works are well known to Lawyers at this day. *Editor.*

O

this,

this church, though not so large, is incomparably richer.

“ Mary, though I doubt not she had almost all her life been affected with the general gloom of this awfully melancholy home of her ancestors, appeared to have never before examined its minutiae. She was now very attentive to my questions, and her brother’s communications, who, without any vain display of his ancestors fame, gave me the highest entertainment by his interesting anecdotes of the many illustrious heroes, whose bones repose in this small and quiet retreat. Under a very rich gothic arch adorned with pinnacles, open work, and the most delicate pendant ornaments, lies stretched at length on a gorgeous altar-tomb, the body of the renowned Sir Lewis De-Clifford, Knight of the Garter, (the founder of their branch) in a complete suit of armour, his coat of arms enamelled on his breast, his head pillowed by an helmet, his feet resting against a recumbent lion. Mary seemed to listen with pleasure, while I read the following epitaph,
written

written in the old letter with which she was not familiar :

Of youre charitpe praye for the soulls of Sire Lewis De-Clifforde, Knyghte of the moste Noble Order of the Garter, and of the Ladye Elinoure his wyffe. Whiche Syre Lewis wonne grete renoune in the warres in Fraunce, under owre hyghe and myghte Soueraigne Henrye the fyfte, and decessyd the seventhe daye of Octobre, MCCCCXXII. Ande the sayde Elinoure was daugheter of the Lorde Zouche, and dyed the fourthe daye of Maye MCCCCXL. On whose soulls Iesu have mercye.

“ Mary’s imagination seemed to be set to work by the memorial; she gazed upon the gigantic limbs of her ancestor; she contemplated, and appeared even to examine with minuteness, the various arms, and quarterings with which the tomb is adorned; and asked questions both of me and her brother, that shewed a taste so exquisite, a fancy so enlarged, and information so infinitely beyond her years and sex, and these too flowing from a person beyond measure more beautiful than I ever beheld before, that I

know not how to express the delight I experienced. We continued examining, and conversing, when the secession of Mary for a long time from our party engaged my enquiry; I looked round the church, and could not immediately see any thing of her; at length almost hid by a pew, I saw that enchanting figure on her knees apparently lost in earnest attention to something on the floor. I pointed her out to her brother, who instantly called to her, and she rose I thought with a sweet confusion in her cheeks and eyes, and joined us. “Miss “De-Clifford,” said I, “what has had the “good fortune to arrest so much of your “notice?” “I was only trying to read an “old epitaph” said she, striving to speak with ease and indifference, but in an evident flutter, which on perceiving I did not then pursue the subject. We wandered round the church examining monument after monument, (while Mary seemed, instead of having the awakened attention she had hitherto shewn, to be continually absorbed in her own thoughts,) till we came at length

length to the spot, where I had seen her so extraordinarily employed. I cast a glance at her; her sweet eyes expressed the most evident distress. I looked upon the floor, and saw a splendid brass plate, inlaid with the rich figures of a warrior and his wife, in their surcoats and mantles of arms; and instantly recognizing the coat, impaled with that of De-Clifford, on a pane of glass, which I had seen preserved with such care on Mary's table the other day, read the following epitaph at the bottom of the stone:

Here lyethe the bodye of William
De-Clifforde Esquyer, and Margarete hys
Wylfe, one of the daughters of
Syr Richarde Widdvile of Grafetone
Knyghte, sister to Richard, Lorde
Widdvile, father to owre Soberaigne
Ladye Elizabeth, Queene of thys
Realme. Which William decessyd the
thirde daye of December MCCCCII,
And the sayde Margarete was a
gude and pious benefactore to thys
chirche, and dyed the tenth daye
of Julye MCCCCXXIII.

“ To me I think the story of Mary’s heart was now discovered; I recollected often having heard De-Clifford speak of his friend WOODVILE; and as I read that fated name in the epitaph, I again wickedly glanced my eyes at Mary, and saw blushes spreading totally over her face, and the tears rising so fast in her confused eyes, that she turned away her countenance to hide them; but I, who would not for the world have given her pain, myself as soon as possible turned the subject: and she seemed in some measure to recover her looks. I have heard that Woodvile has a noble heart, a fine person, and a genius of the sublimest kind. Good Heavens! how such a creature must love such an object! And what extacy passing human it must be, to be beloved by such an angel as she is! Yet there seems some cause of bitterness mixed with this cup of bliss, of which I am not at present aware. The lovely girl is certainly unhappy. I cannot think it possible that she receives not a return from such a Being as Woodvile.

“ The

“The remaining contents of the church I shall not be so particular about, for my mind from this time was so occupied with the interesting discovery I had made, that I did not continue to take the same minute notice. There is a heavy and expensive monument of a figure in armour kneeling at a desk, opposite to his wife, under an arch richly ornamented, and supported by Corinthian pillars, for one of the family who was a distinguished soldier in the Netherlands and a friend of Sir Philip Sydney, with some long and tedious verses, but this strange mixture of Grecian and Gothic architecture always displeases me. Another of an ancestor, who represented the County in Charles II's days, a recumbent figure, in his great wig, and formal coat, resting on his side, and supporting his head on his elbow, (as if in contemplation on a sofa,) is of a style still more disgusting. But this is the fault of the times, not of the family taste. A simple black marble recording the affecting case of a Clifford, who fell for Charles I. in the civil wars, pleased me infinitely better. The simplicity

plicity of one modern epitaph delighted me;
I will therefore send it you.

Here lies the body of
George De-Clifford, Esq. who after
having lived to his 80th year, universally
loved and respected, having many times
declined the Honor of representing this
his native county in Parliament, closed
a life of chearfulness and religion, with great
ease and composure, Oct. 13, 1742.

Here rest the bones of one, whose ancient race
Ages have seen in this sequester'd place,
Remov'd from courtly vice, and vulgar strife,
Lead the sweet tenor of their peaceful life.
Not that, whene'er their country's good might call,
Int'rest could check, or Danger could appall;
For oft in arms, acros the billowy main,
Proud France has seen them on her conquer'd plain:
For Freedom check'd, or Royal Power enslav'd,
Domestic furies often have they brav'd;
And often has the British senate rung
With the bold thunder of their honest tongue!
But soon to native fields they lov'd to fly,
Where their own trees might o'er their slumbers sigh.
Here no vile passions thro' the troubled day
Drive Fancy, Charity, and Peace away,

Nor

Nor Folly's noise, nor Envy's haggard form
Keep the vex'd bosom in perpetual storm.
A chearful course of lengthen'd life they keep,
Then here in quiet with their fathers sleep.

“ These lines produce a soothing train of ideas in my mind, so congenial with my own sentiments, that I have been dwelling a great deal upon the subject. Indeed they have induced me to add a few verses of my own in the same course of thought. I shall write them down for you, unfinished as they are. You know the rapidity with which I am habituated to compose, and the impatience of my temper which declines correction. In truth, I am rather an advocate for this in principle as well as practice. For tho' all who write hastily may not write well, few write well who do not. Since correction and toil will generally and even imperceptibly destroy that natural train of ideas, which characterizes the first flow of Genius, and which is one of its chief beauties, without attaining any species of merit, that can pretend to counterbalance the loss of it.
In

In saying this, I beg you will not raise your expectations of the following very crude

V E R S E S,

On Ancestry, and a Country Life.

O ye, who in your ancient mansions dwell,
 On upland lawn, green plain, or quiet dell,
 Proud of your Fathers' glories ! let not Guile,
 From those sweet scenes seduce Contentment's smile ;
 Let Grandeur flash, and Ostentation's eye
 Look, as it glances, for the envious sigh ;
 Let Folly spend, and Indian riches blaze,
 Scorn'd or unnotic'd to your wiser gaze ;
 Long have black vices mark'd Ambitions road,
 While tortur'd Conscience haunts his false abode.
 Forth let them come from city and from town,
 In modish manners boast their brave renown,
 Vain of their present splendor, while the past
 'Neath a dark veil of feign'd contempt is cast !
 Ah ! see the puny upstarts of a day,
 Rise to insult, and flatter to betray,
 While ye, alas ! ye foolish, and ye vain !
 Leave your own posts to pert and low disdain !
 Oh wake, nor let the specious plea prevail,
 While the low villain boasts the generous tale ;
 Scorn the proud scorner, let the long-lov'd name
 Of your dead fathers holy reverence claim ;
 Boast how they led a life of chearful ease,
 Beneath their own hereditary trees ;

That

That far from all that's low and mean, and bred
 By rural Virtue, all their moments fled;
 Nor nurs'd in mobs, nor yet from Knavery's school,
 They stemm'd thro' crimes and blood to wealth and
 rule!

“ Weak and prejudiced as interested and half-witted writers may have experienced these opinions to be, yet they are sanctioned by no less authorities than the deep and philosophical Lord Bacon in his Essay on Nobility, (as you well recollect,) and by that illumined phænomenon of modern days, the idol of our adoration, Edmund Burke.*

* While this was going through the Press, there appeared in the Gent. Mag. for Nov. 1791, an excellent Letter on the *Causes of the loss of Simplicity in modern manners*, in which p. 989, is the following passage. “ In the rapid change of landed property
 “ on the extinction of a family in whom long possession had rivetted ancient manners, some exhausted
 “ heir throws the estate into the hands of a state peculator, a gamester, a public defaulter, a borough-hunter, or a Nabob. In vain do we look for virtue or morality here. The land under this curse
 “ must bring forth thorns and briars of immorality,
 “ and vice.” *Editor.*

“ I have

“ I have wandered too far from the little angel, who is the principal object of my present thoughts. I have used my discovery, with the greatest possible delicacy towards her, and sometimes seem almost to have engaged her confidence. Her distress at first was exquisite; she appeared fearful of meeting my eyes; she sighed and coloured, and looked as if she reproached me with the tenderest melancholy. Her brother also, whose penetration seems to have discovered the state of her heart, though I doubt whether he has yet let her know it, grew thoughtful, and I feared felt pain at what he saw I suspected. But a few hours have made matters sit easier, and I am more delighted than ever with my sweet companions. But my letter grows too long. So adieu !

Your very sincere friend,

Anthony Fitzherbert.”

LET.

LETTER IV.

“ Woodlands, Dec. 12, 1790.

“ My dear Friend,

“ THIS is probably the last letter you will receive from me at this place; unless the snow, which seems to threaten us, detains me. It is bitterly cold, and there is a dark and hazy look in the air, which portends a heavy fall. Let it come! in the company of Mary De-Clifford I could find happiness for ever.

“ I find Woodvile is indeed a wonderful Being, and well deserving of her heart. The very name of WOODVILE of GRAFTON tells you the illustrious family, which he re-
P presents.

presents. But his personal qualities are yet more eminent, his heart the seat of all noble passions, and his imagination so sublime, and yet so tender, that he is a Genius of the first class. I have seen some extraordinary specimens of his poetry, which he scatters about with a wild and careless profusion. Description seems his talent, but then he is often so irregular, and even incorrect, that dull critics might find a thousand faults in him; yet the true spirit of the Muse so much pervades all his compositions, that for my part, I am quite blind to his inequalities. I understand he almost

“Lisp’d in numbers, for the numbers came.”

But the eccentricities of his character being from the age of eighteen much controuled by the polished and uniform manners of the fashionable world, into which his connections from that period immersed him, his genius for some time appeared suppressed, and he has yet at the age of six or seven and twenty, scarce recovered it, nor let the sleeping embers burst into the blaze, of which they are probably

probably capable. With these qualities does it not seem as if he was formed for Mary De-Clifford? And would you not suppose that the attachment of such a pair, (for I have some reason to believe him violently in love with her,) would make both themselves, and their friends happy? Yet I fear it is not so. Mrs. De-Clifford (oh tasteless woman!) seems to hate the character of Woodvile, and cannot bear the idea of her daughter conceiving a partiality for him, which she appears to suspect; Woodvile's affairs, I believe, tho' the dregs of the family estate still produce a large rental, are much damaged; and there seem other mysterious difficulties which I cannot clearly penetrate. Even of Woodvile's inclinations, (though I have already expressed my own conviction on the subject,) there are reports, on which Mrs. De-Clifford is continually with great triumph insisting before her daughter, in whom, they seem to raise many uneasy doubts; and which her brother does not appear prepared by any positive information to contradict. They assert that he is attached to a lady of the

name of Barnard, a great fortune; and that he is soon to be married to her. But I can never believe, that one (and such an one as Woodvile too) who has long known, and even been a favourite of Mary De-Clifford, can feel a passion for any other woman.

I stole into her little library this morning, and had the address to contrive to spend some hours with her there, reading and talking. I cannot find words to express my admiration of her mind, as well as her person. She understands French, and Italian thoroughly, and takes particular delight in Petrarch. She does not much enjoy the French poetry. Among the English, after her favourites Spenser, Milton and Cowley, Thomson seems altogether to please her most, and of the elegant love-writers of the last century, she possesses fairly written out in MS. many little delicate poems of Lovelace, (who I believe was related to the family,) some of them such as I do not recollect seeing in print. This selection I presume was made by her brother, who thought there were some inde-
licacies

licacies scattered among the two volumes of published poems, improper for the chaste eyes of his sister. Of these elegant verses she is very fond. Of Novels and Romances, she thinks the inimitable *Castle of Otranto* and the plaintive novels of *Mrs. Smith*, in which the truest pathos, and most exquisite descriptions are united, so much superior to any others, that she will not bear to hear any thing else named with them. But she is indeed a Poetess herself: as I was turning over one of the books, (I believe it was the *Memoirs of Edw. IV's Court*, already mentioned,) I found a loose paper in it, half wet with her tears, which had nearly washed out the pencil lines upon it, and this I had a strong curiosity to read. Her little watchful eyes soon perceived the treasure I had found, and with the deepest colour on her cheeks intreated me to give it her. I solicited for the licence of reading it. “Indeed she could not comply: any thing but that: it was nonsense: she could not for worlds”——thus she went on praying almost in tears: “she would kneel to me, if I would but restore

“ it!” To have such an angel, with her earnest blue eyes, and little white hands, in supplication to me! Good heavens! what delight! But yet I was hard-hearted. She then endeavoured to snatch it from me. She leant across me to seize it from my farther hand, which was extended from her, and in supporting herself against me, I felt her little tender bosom beat against my shoulder so, that I never can forget the sensation. Her attempts were ineffectual; I carried off the paper in triumph, and now write you down a copy of it.

S O N N E T.

When this sad spirit quits its woe-worn frame,
And flies releas'd to yonder starry sphere,
O ne'er may it forget its former flame,
But still the friends it lov'd on earth be dear!
Then thou, thou idol of my heart, whose name
My trembling lips pronounce but with a tear,
Wilt first and most its guardian wishes claim,
And thee its ceaseless care will hover near!
O thou, who only can'st my bosom warm,
Think not a selfish passion fills my heart,
For if some happier maid of fairer form
More joy can to thy social hours impart,
O let me but go hence, and watch above
Thy earthly bliss with pure seraphic love!

“ It is evident that this is addressed to Woodvile. The little angel half believes in the reports she hears, and with these generous sentiments does she soothe herself. I have restored the paper to her, and as I pressed her tender hand, felt the tear of admiration rise in my eyes, which so far from escaping her raised an instantaneous sympathy in hers. My tongue could not refrain from uttering blessings on her. I thought a peculiar concurrence of circumstances had rendered my heart secure from her; but I must soon take myself away, or even I should be made irrecoverably miserable. For, knowing what I do, a passion for her in me would be the most unhappy kind of madness, since I am aware that in that case, I should

———“ hope, tho’ hope were lost,
Tho’ heav’n and earth my passion cost.”

“ Yet however, whatever my admiration may be, (and I assure you it is little short of idolatry,) my heart is secure. She summoned courage to day to ask me, if I knew Woodvile, and took out of her pocket-book
a son-

a sonnet of his, which she shewed me; it is descriptive of a storm, which I suspect happened during a walk the lovers were taking together; it is characteristic of that impetuous, wild fancy, by which he is distinguished. I here inclose it to you.* The original is scrawled with a pencil apparently in great haste. From hence she gradually found an opportunity to enquire if I had heard where he now was. But though I should have been happy to have conveyed any grateful news to her, I could give but little information. What will be the event of her attachment, (the most serious and sublimed I ever saw) I cannot guess. Mrs. De-Clifford seems determined not only to oppose Woodvile, but to endeavour by every means to bring about a match with that stupid odious fool, Sir Peter Lumm, who I find has actually made propositions very importunate to her, (if not to Mary,) and which she seems resolved by every means in her power to carry into execution. My friend George, seems very un-

* It is already printed, p. 38, and therefore omitted here. *Editor.*

happy

happy about it, and unable to determine how it is proper to act, for though he cannot bear to disobey his mother, he has his sister's happiness entirely at heart, and though I do not know that she has yet opened her bosom to him, yet he certainly is acquainted with her partiality, though he may not guess its violence;—besides the preference he feels for Woodvile. Yet the report of Woodvile's intended marriage to Miss Barnard gains ground, without his ever hearing from him a contradiction of it; so that even he, (for Woodvile has never made a declaration to him of his attachment to Mary,) begins to be staggered."

Dec. 14th.

"I had not time to finish my letter yesterday. To day the frost, and all appearance of snow are gone, and if I can find no other excuse for staying, I shall leave this place very soon. Sir Peter Lumm has been here this morning, and Mary's eyes look very red, and Mrs. De-Clifford's very angry.
The

The foolish Baronet was inclined to show away, and I had an ill natured pleasure in taking every opportunity of mortifying and exposing him, for which, though I almost fear I have lost for ever the favor of the mother, I received recompense enough in the grateful looks of the daughter. After he was gone she came up to me with eyes gleaming through mists, like the sun through an April shower, and there was such tenderness about her, that I ventured to steal a kiss, at which, though she appeared much distressed, she did not seem offended; but I must never dare for the sake of my own peace to do it again.

“ Propositions for the sweet girl’s marriage with Sir Peter, are certainly in very regular agitation, between him, and Mrs. De-Clifford. But surely she cannot be so cruel, when the whole is known to her. I am certain the grave will be Mary’s lot, rather than the altar with Sir Peter. And can the wretch be so mean, as to be content with the mother’s approbation, when the daughter
treats

treats him with such marked hatred? — I cannot bear to look forward to the consequences of this conduct, while the little meek lamb is indulging in her dreams of Woodvile, and knows not of the mischief that is plotting for her.

“ If this is the last time you hear from me at Woodlands, pity the grief I shall have at parting.

Your's,

Anthony Fitzherbert.

C H A P. VI.

IT was now the fifteenth of December; Sir Peter Lumm by letters and visits became every day more urgent in his suit, and Woodvile, (at whom the raillery and oblique interdictions of Mrs. De-Clifford were continually growing stronger,) neither came, nor wrote. Mary began to be seriously unhappy, and her brother wept in private over the enthusiastic attachment, which he perceived she was nourishing. Fitzherbert also watched her with the tenderness of a brother; but as she yet had not ventured to ease her bosom by confidential conversation with any body, the passage

face of Shakespeare might be applied to her, that

“ She never told her love

“ But let concealment like a worm i’ th’ bud

“ Prey on her damask cheek.”

The extreme pensiveness of her countenance added, if possible, to her beauty, and she still took her morning rambles, looking like the Deity of these Sylvan scenes. Fitzherbert in his strong manner said that had he first met her alone in these walks, he should almost have fallen down, and worshipped her. A bright frosty morning melting at noon beneath a short but splendid sun afforded her a scenery, that threw a smile upon her melancholy.* She was now looking round her upon the chearful appearance of nature, and felt the fostering thrills of tender hope rising in her fancy, when she determined to take from her pocket, and open a letter which the post had brought, but of which, as she knew not the hand, she had

* The melancholy mase put on kind looks, and
smil’d.

Cowley.

Q

hitherto

hitherto deferred, with a sort of mysterious fear, to pore into the contents. She tore the seal, tremblingly, and still as she unfolded the paper, a strange hand meeting her eyes, she hastened to read the following.

“ Madam,

“ A tender concern for your happiness impells me, (however unwilling to take this oblique method,) to let you into the following information. Beware of Mr. Woodvile; if he attempts to win your affection, he is false; false, because his own heart is engaged elsewhere; and even were not his heart, (which it is,) his faith, his solemn plighted faith, is. This is sufficient for the present. Beware: you cannot now make ignorance an excuse for receiving his addresses.

“ Your well-wisher.

— — — —

Good Heavens! what a cruel blow upon her happiness was this! For some moments it absolutely stupified her. And when she
came

came to reflect, it was all unmixed grief. To lose Woodvile for ever, and to find him false too! What an aggravation to the purity of her affection! Yet she could not think clearly; she could not reason; all was confusion in her mind. She wept by fits; by fits she muttered to herself, and almost called upon the name of cruel Woodvile; and by fits, as if exhausted, she seemed to be overpowered by a dull insensibility. She had wandered at length, scarce knowing whither she went, to the bench, from whence Woodvile and herself had contemplated the fine Autumnal storm, the day before he last left Woodlands, and there, through mere fatigue, threw herself down upon it, and indulged in a fresh flood of tears. The ghosts of departed pleasures soon rose up to add new tortures to her mind. "Yes," cried she, as she contemplated the naked woods around her, "The winter winds have bared
" your leafless branches! let them rage on,
" and leave not a trace of your former beauty
" behind, to reproach me with the memory
" of past delights: their fury is not half so

“cruel, as the storm that has desolated this
“wretched bosom! — Woodvile, cruel Wood-
“vile, if thou hadst but told me! Indeed, I
“could have borne any thing for thy hap-
“piness, if I could but have enjoyed thy
“friendship—I could have wept with joy
“over the — — — —” before she could
utter another word, she gave a piercing
shriek, and almost fainted, for, from the
walk behind her, appeared the figure of
Woodvile himself. He caught her in his
arms; she was almost lifeless; her eyes half-
closed; she scarce breathed, and seemed
quite insensible; he was frightened even to
an agony; he scarce knew what he did; he
called to her to speak; she answered not: he
pressed her hand, it was cold; he put his
lips to her cheeks which were pallid as death,
but she yet heeded him not; he saw her little
white bosom heave, he felt a momentary
courage and at length had recollection enough
to draw a bottle of salts from his pocket,
which he administered so effectually, that she
seemed to be reviving. Her blue eyes be-
gan to open, yet she looked as if she knew
him,

him not. "Mary," he cried with mournful earnestness, "my beloved Mary, speak; do you not know me?" She still seemed not to hear him: he again put his cheek to hers, and feeling some returning warmth in it, bathed it with her tears; still she did not speak: again he addressed her: she slowly opened her eyes, and with a vacant stare, cried, "Who are you?" The shock of these words ran like the chill of death over his whole frame: he again in an agony pressed her hand; she opened her sick eyes: "Speak, my adored angel," cried he, "my dearest Mary, speak! It is Woodvile calls to you!" — "Woodvile!" answered she with horror, and again sunk back, as if she fainted. Woodvile held her still closer in his arms; he felt a pang that for some moments almost deprived him of his senses; yet he watched with an earnestness, on which his existence seemed to depend, the recovery of Mary, who at length reviving gave him a look of affliction which pierced his soul; she drew her hand from his, as from a serpent, and burst into a flood of tears. "Good

“ God !” he cried, “ my most beloved girl,
“ what can this mean? Why do you look so
“ angry on me? It is your Woodvile kneels
“ to you !”—She turned her blue eyes with
a stern agony upon him, and said: “ Wood-
“ vile !—Not *my* Woodvile ! leave me Sir !
“ there was a time, but” (sighing deeply).
“ I am not now so foolish !”—“ For Hea-
“ ven’s sake,” replied he, “ tell me, how I
“ have offended you ?” pressing her hand
again: she withdrew it instantly, and cried:
“ Let me go, Sir, this moment, nor add to
“ my wretchedness the conscious guilt of
“ having my hand profaned by the touch
“ of —” “ Whom, madam ?” interrupted
he almost with phrenzy, “ Of Woodvile,
“ who lives but in you; who would die to
“ make you happy? Is this such monstrous
“ guilt? Is this —” looking earnestly in her
face, till he forgot his words. “ Deceive me
“ no more, Sir,” said she in tears, “ your
“ specious flattery must no longer stain my
“ ears !” “ Gracious Heaven,” he cried,
“ what can this mean? What arts have been
“ used to blacken me? If there is truth on
“ earth,

“earth, I never have deceived you, Mary!” The solemn manner in which he pronounced this, and the awful and impressive look of his eyes made Mary half relent. He caught the first glimpse of her softening countenance; and hung upon her lovely hand with kisses so mixed with tears, that she felt a returning tenderness thrill her whole frame, which yet she determined to suppress. “Oh abuse not,” she cried, “my weakness! I would yet hate you, if I could!” “Hate me Mary!” he replied with mournful tenderness. Dreadful doubts still tormented her mind; she was filled with horror at the idea of listening to a man, whose faith was plighted to another, yet she could not entirely refuse her belief to the impassioned voice and manner of her once-beloved Woodvile. One of his arms was still supporting her, the other resting cross her knee clasped her little trembling hand in his, while yet faint and sick she scarce knew that she leant against his shoulder. He too, tormented with what had passed, seemed unconscious of the luxury of his situation. He looked with a countenance
of

of excessive tenderness in her face, and said:
“ Mary, speak but kindly to me, and then,
“ if I must lose you, I think I can die in
“ peace.”—She could not resist this; her
tears flowed afresh, and while they fell so
fast that they bedewed her pallid cheeks, and
dropped on her palpitating bosom, she sobbed
out scarce articulately “ Die Woodvile!
“ you must not die, preserve your life to
“ make her, who claims it, happy! No,
“ Woodvile, to die will be my lot!” to
which she added with still more agitation,
“ willingly will I do it, if I can but add to
“ the happiness of Woodvile!” He fell down
on his knees before her, and while he clasped
both her hands in his, he cried: “ Most ge-
“ nerous and most divine angel, speak! ex-
“ plain to me the cause of this mysterious
“ mistake! who but you possesses my heart?
“ who but you can claim my vows? To you,
“ to you alone, every thought, every action
“ of my life is dedicated! No idolatry was
“ ever more fervid, than the adoration with
“ which I love you!” She sighed, coloured,
half-smiled, wept, she strove in vain to speak,
and

and her heart seemed as if it would burst, it beat so through her delicate dress against Woodvile's arm that supported her; and then the conflict between her hopes, fears, and tenderness being too much for her, she sunk back again fainting in his trembling arms. She soon however revived sufficiently to relieve his apprehensions. His heart was for some time too big to speak; he watched with melancholy love and adoration the changes of her countenance, till at length she opened upon him eyes of sad and apprehensive softness, of which the expression called forth a thousand blessings from his lips. "Oh Woodvile," she uttered in sighs, "oh, Woodvile, what am I doing? How will this credulous heart be justified in believing you? I am told," (and at that moment she seemed to feel an agony at his touch, and was withdrawing herself from him) "I am told that—I dare not utter it," (casting her tender eyes on him, and appearing to be melted by his countenance) "no: you cannot speak untruths, Woodvile, and so solemnly too!" — "Oh," cried

cried he, kissing again her snowy hand, and then for the first time venturing to fix his lips on hers, from which it seemed they would never separate again: "oh" murmured he out at last, "let the blackest accusations come as thick as they will upon me, if I am but thus acquitted by my beloved Mary!"—"Oh stay, Woodvile!" "be not too hasty!" she replied, (trembling all over with a strange sensibility, she never felt before;) "think, if you yet deceive me! and pity a little wretched girl, who from her very childhood has nourished the purest affection for you!" Language was now too poor for their mutual feelings, they wept on each others bosoms; and so exquisite, so exalted an affection, so properly tempered with all the finer thrills of the human frame, and yet so separated from all that is impure, scarce ever met in two lovers before!

As to Woodvile, surely such happiness was never before in possession of an human being as was at this moment in his! With what purity, and yet with what warmth he loved

loved her, can only be conceived by the few people, who are born with the same sensibility, the same fancy, and genius as himself. Her very touch was extacy to him, for her delicate skin white as snow was all fragrance, and he often envied and yet blessed the bold winds that by their pressure made her dress fit closer, and shewed the exquisite gracefulness of her make, and now and then displayed the slenderness of her ancles, and a glance of her little firm and milk-white bosom. Yet in the sanctity of his passion she was as secure with him as with angels.

“ Can any mortal mixture of Earth’s mold
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast.

————— I oft have heard
My mother Circe with the Syrens three
Amid the flowry-kirtled Naiades
Culling their potent herbs, and baleful drugs,
Who as they sung, would take the prison’d soul
And lap it in Elysium; Scylla wept
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybis murmur’d soft applause;
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robb’d it of itself,

But

But such a sacred, and homefelt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now."*

I have been tempted to borrow these beautiful lines of the sublimest, and most beautiful of all Poets, and still when I think of the pure admiration that such a divine creature as Mary De-Clifford was calculated to inspire, cannot refrain from applying a few more lines from another enchanting passage of the same poem.

"So dear to Heav'n is faintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried Angels lacky her
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
And in clear dream and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal."†

* Comus, V. 244, 264.

† Ibid. V. 453—463.

Woodvile raised his head from the pure and sacred bosom of Mary, which thrilled with exquisite tenderness, that ran through her whole frame, and scarce articulately yet earnestly poured a thousand and a thousand blessings on her, which she received with smiling tears. “You do not doubt me now, Mary,” he cried.—“Oh no,” she sweetly replied, “I could not, if I would, any longer doubt—my long-lov’d Woodvile!”—“Long-lov’d Woodvile!” repeating the words in extacy,—“Kindest Mary, what rapture those dear words convey to me! But tell me, thou idol of my heart, tell me, what arts could induce you to doubt your devoted Woodvile!” She hesitated, and then with some fear, pulled out the anonymous letter she had received in the morning, and gave it him to read. He eagerly opened it, and turning pale as he read, exclaimed with agitated indignation: “Oh artful wicked girl, it is she has done this: yes, I trace her ill-disguised hand; I long have doubted her disposition, but it shall not avail her; she——” “Who?”

R

inter-

interrupted Mary with trepidation. “Emily
“Barnard!” replied he, uttering her name
with mingled anger, and contempt. Mary
turned dreadfully pale; she could scarce
speak. “Emily Barnard!” She repeated
mournfully. “Yes!” added he, “she has
“tortured me enough by her pursuit of me
“without adding perfidy to her forwardness,
“but this is too much to bear!” And then
turning eyes of the softest love on Mary, he
with a tender voice continued: “how could
“the foolish girl hope to interest the heart
“of him, who was acquainted with you!”
To have her fears so sweetly dissipated al-
most overpowered her; blushes and tears
rose together, she sighed and wept, and blef-
sed him with her beaming eyes, yet dared not
trust herself to speak; he pressed her little
lovely hand to his heart, and made a solemn
vow, that nothing but death should sepa-
rate them, to which she almost ventured to
give consent.

In this delicious meeting time passed un-
heeded by them, till the darkening shades
of

of evening, and the cold dews (which had been for a long while unfelt) at length reminded them of returning. Woodvile for some moments hesitated whether he should accompany her to the house, but at length resolved to do it, both of them detesting the appearance of artful and clandestine meetings.

They hurried home, both in too great a luxury of feelings to talk much, and were luckily met in the hall by De-Clifford, to whom Mary with some attempt at gaiety, (to hide her confusion,) begged leave to introduce a stranger, for such she said he certainly was at Woodlands. Her brother received his almost lost friend with that sweet frankness, and warmth, which ever characterized his delightful manners towards those he loved, and which filled the heart of Woodvile with gratitude, for he was conscious that himself had not always in his moody fits treated him, (however warm his affection for him was,) with the attention he deserved. They both knew a less easy reception awaited him within. They entered the

R 2. eating

eating room ; dinner was just ready ; he bowed to Mrs. De-Clifford, who very formally asked him how he did. He was introduced to Fitzherbert, in whose manners and looks he at once found a sympathy that made him easy. The dinner entered ; candles were brought ; the fire blazed ; the party were seated at the table, and two or three glasses of wine made Woodvile, (however exquisitely sensible to neglect,) soon forget in the rest of the circle the cold, and even angry, looks of Mrs. De-Clifford. Yet Mary scarce knew how to support the fiery eyes of her mother which were continually darted at her, and dreaded the moment of their leaving the room, when she should no longer have the protection of the company. But this made her heart hang upon Woodvile but with the more tenderness, and the touch of his hand, or even his foot under the table thrilled her frame, softened with grief at her mother's anger, with sensations more melting than she had ever before known. She could not help looking to him as a sort of protector, the most exquisite idea to her that ever delighted

delighted her imagination. Her mother at length rose, and Mary with trembling steps accompanied her. They had scarce reached the drawing-room, before Mrs. De-Clifford's anger broke forth. "How came Mr. Woodvile here, Mary?"—"I know not, ma'am, I met him coming hither, as I was strolling in the park this morning."—"An appointment, I suppose, fine doings indeed!" She wept: "you terrify me, ma'am, you were not wont to speak to me thus harshly! how have I deserved it now!"—"You did not use to disobey me, child; but now you pay no attention to my opinions!"—"Opinions, ma'am! Good Heavens, what——!" "Yes, child," (interrupting her,) "I think my knowledge of the world will at least enable me to form a better judgment of people than you can do! Yet, notwithstanding the opposite tenor of all my conversation, I see your fondness for that pauper, Woodvile, while those whom I approve, even though adorned with fashion, wealth, and sense, pass at best unregarded by you!"—

“ Pauper, ma’am !” She repeated, shocked to death almost; “ you do not call Mr. Woodvile a pauper ! But as to Sir Peter Lumm, ma’am, whom, I too well know “ you mean, alas ! ma’am ” (stopping and doubting whether to utter her abhorrence of him) “ any thing I would obey you in, “ but —— ” “ but, child, no buts with “ me ! ” — almost choaked with rage, and flinging out of the room, lest she should hear her daughter make an unqualified resolution, against which she yet hoped at a more convenient opportunity to influence her.

Mary was now wretched, her mother had not only shewn a violence of passion towards her, she had never discovered before, but at once pronounced her interdiction of Woodvile, and her encouragement of Sir Peter Lumm. She dreaded the entry of tea, and feared with a strange mixture of feelings the summons to the gentlemen. — At length they came, elated with wine, and in rapturous spirits. Three such intelligent beings ! Conceive Woodvile, Fitzherbert, and De-Clifford

ford together! They were all soul! Seven centuries had seen their ancestors shining together, and placed far above every thing that is mean, and now what minds informed those spiritualized bodies! It was, indeed

“ The feast of reason, and the flow of soul.”

Mary saw the expression of Woodvile's eyes, and heard the eloquence of his conversation, with a pleasure that made her forget for the time her mother's indignation. Mrs. De-Clifford was fullen and silent. The joy of De-Clifford and Fitzherbert kept pace with that of Woodvile and Mary. It was an evening of inspiration.

Mary past the long night in a conflict between the sweet whispers of trembling hope, and the bitter fears instilled into her by her mother's conversation. Her maid brought her as she was rising in the morning, a letter, which instantly recognizing the hand-writing of the direction, she opened with trembling expectation. It contained the following lines.

“ My

“ My most beloved Mary,

“ I cannot go to my rest without pouring out my thanks to you in a more explicit manner than my faltering tongue will suffer me to do, for the result of our morning's interview. How long and entirely my heart has been devoted to you can only be known to myself! And the degree of idolatry, with which I love you, as I can find no words to express, I must be content to keep within my own bosom. A day spent with you is worth a life of common happiness. But oh, my Mary, what misery do I feel in absence from you! How dull, how insupportable is the common intercourse of society! My wild fancy exhausts itself with thinking of you, and I curse the objects that interrupt my day-dreams. Night comes, and still I lull myself to sleep but with the presence of your image; and the first object that presents itself to my mind as I wake, is the form of Mary De-Clifford. I wet the pillow with my tears, and mutter to your shade in my slumbers,

bers; I awake; the vision vanishes, and in unavailing misery I mourn the wretched void before me.

“ Grafton, once the scene of my most exquisite pleasures, a place associated in my mind with all my infant joys and affections, a place which I have been from childhood in the habits of venerating as the ancient abode of my ancestors, is no longer able to delight me. Its wild scenery, its deep woods, its lakes, and its opening lawns, familiar to my boyish eyes, and congenial with my natural taste, were wont to fill my fancy with rapture, and I used to wander among them day after day forgetful of all worldly cares. But since I have gazed on the growing charms of Mary De-Clifford, since I have been acquainted with the angelic beauty of her mind and person, even these scenes in her absence have no power to delight or even to sooth me. O dearest, dearest girl, could I but find words to express the bliss I feel in your company, how my eyes are enchanted by your person, and my soul is exalted.

exalted by your soft and inspired voice, you would read of a passion more warm, more enthusiastic than ever raged in the human bosom before! I loved you when a child, as a little creature of another element; I have gazed for hours unobserved on your innocent amusements, and heard with pleased attention the expanding sentiments of your celestial mind. But it is now more than two years since I have been gradually nourishing this flame in my breast, which by all my early efforts I could not suppress. You were scarce fourteen, and your little white bosom just began to swell, (pardon me the bold expression,) when I could no longer behold you with that ease, and self-possessing calmness, with which I formerly viewed you. There was no resisting the meeting you in your walks, and feasting my eyes and my mind with your conversation and your beauty: the angelic innocence of your looks and thoughts gave me an easy and unrestrained indulgence of the sweetest and most heavenly intercourse, that my imagination can conceive on earth: the hours and mornings

ings we spent in rambles amid the woody and varied scenery of your native park, are written in indelible and most distinct characters on my mind. How often unconsciously has the softness of your looks, and even your slightest touch, thrilled my frame with exquisite sensations when yet with a determined resolution I never breathed to you the delight I experienced! I would not attempt to poison those pure ears with early flattery, nor prejudice, when so very young, a choice that your future judgment might not ratify! My conversations were general. Your good-nature listened to me as your instructor. How I loved to see your illumined understanding open, and to encourage your brilliant yet plaintive fancy in the admiration of the great scenes of nature, with which it was so early delighted! Oh Mary, earth never saw such an angel as thou wert then! Thou wert in reality like the fabled Deities of antiquity, that inhabited the woods and forests! Thou wert the very figure of inspiration. But the past autumn, when you at length completed your sixteenth year, when
my

my passion grew almost to madness, I fear it too often betrayed itself, against all my exertions. Some family troubles, that at that time were imparted to me, became aggravated as they intermixed themselves with the idea of you—and the departure from Woodlands at that time, in leaving you tore my mind with an agitation which I fear I ill concealed from you. I will not recount all the difficulties with which I have from that time been surrounded. You alas! have been sometimes too much a witness to my impetuous passions. I own I have injured you, Mary, by the wild jealousy with which I tormented you at the ball at Hawley. It was I also, (but not without being roused by the wicked arts of others,) it was I was the horseman who haunted your walks at Denham-hatch; I feared an happier rival; I left some mysterious notices of my feelings on your accustomed bench, which I hope fell into your hands. But no language can express what I suffered on those two or three unhappy days. Extreme bodily fatigue was added to mental distraction: I rode, or walked, hour after hour

hour about the house, even from sun-rise, till its setting, with an indistinct hope of either meeting you alone, or of I scarce knew what myself: I avoided being seen, like a criminal; I picked up my scanty and meagre meals, as I could; and at night I housed myself with difficulty, and often not without many intreaties, under the weak shelter of some neighbouring cottager's hovel, where I watched with impatience the break of morning light. Those fine lines in the *SUICIDE* of our beloved poet, Tom Warton, (over the news of whose death we wept together but a few months since,) were continually recurring to my mind, as so congenial to my own situation.

“ Full oft unknowing, and unknown
He wore his endless noons alone
Amid th’ autumnal wood:
Oft was he wont in hasty fit,
Abrupt the social board to quit,
And gaze with eager glance upon the tumbling flood.”

“ Abruptly indeed did I quit my dear
mother’s hospitable table at Grafton, spur-
S red

red on by that demon jealousy, and when at length I had wandered about at Denham, till my distraction became intolerable, all hopes of seeing you alone extinct, and I thought myself discovered, what a figure did I return home! My sweet sister Elinor feared I was deranged, and the artful Emily Barnard rendered me still more distracted by her persecution. All this I was too much overpowered by my joy to tell you, in the interview that at length turned out so delightful at the Hawley-Ball. Since that time, all my griefs and difficulties, (for many and severe ones I have still had,) have been softened by the recollection of your smiles. I could bear no longer absence from you, when I determined to revisit Woodlands, and found you on that sweet bench, the scene of former interviews, where the mixed emotions that mutually agitated our bosoms, are too recent to need recalling to your mind.— Mary, I know how your mother hates me, and it gives me agonies to draw down her anger on you; I would die for you, Mary; cheerfully would I resign this trembling existence,

existence, but I have tried my heart severely, and to live without you is indeed impossible. The tender bosom that has been to penedo me this morning leaves me no longer doubtful of my future conduct.

“Continue to smile on me, beloved Mary, and notwithstanding the decaying walls of Grafton, the hated name and wealth of Sir Peter Lumm, which now I trust are equally contemptible to us both, shall vanish before us. Good night: a thousand and a thousand blessings on you.

Edmund Woodvile.”

It is impossible to describe the varied feelings that agitated the heart of Mary in reading this letter. A breathless fear first shook her whole frame; she trembled, sighed, wept, thrilled with tenderness, blushed as if she was doing wrong, then read on with a terror of she knew not what, and then, as the tears dimmed her sight, dropped on a chair, almost letting the paper fall from her hand,

and so sick that she was obliged to pause for many minutes. So explicit a declaration of Woodvile's passion she did not expect, and it quite overpowered her. At length her eyes became less misty, and with a trembling hand and beating bosom she continued the perusal, till images of tenderness so flattering, so soothing to her fancy, and so congenial to the state of her own breast, totally oppressed her, and as she came to the awful and still unexpected proposals of the close, agitated with hopes and fears too violent to endure, her eyes ceased to see, the paper fell from her, and she sunk senseless against the back of the chair. It was some time before she revived, and then she found herself so bewildered, that she could hardly guess where she was, and wild and indistinct traces of what had passed now pressing on her mind, it was long before she could persuade herself it was any thing more than a dream from which she was waked, till as she again saw the letter lying on the floor, faint blushes again tinged her pale cheeks; she instantly seized it, and having fearfully (as if her delicacy

licacy was alarmed,) imprinted a thousand kisses on it mixed with her tears, gave it a second yet scarce less affecting perusal. To Woodvile though her attachment had been rapidly increasing, she had not examined, and therefore knew not herself, its seriousness or extent, and though she had sometimes indulged indistinct hopes of a mutual passion, yet she had never gravely reflected on its tendency, and considered images of the future associated with him rather as momentary dreams of her fancy, than as matters of reality. Besides she had been habituated to consider herself, as still little more than a child. She therefore could scarce believe her eyes in reading the certainty and particularity of Woodvile's written declarations; and still when she gravely acknowledged them to be real, new doubts alarmed her; she was perplexed how to act, and knew not whether to answer it, or if she did, what to say. At length the pen, ink and paper, that were constantly ready by her (who made so much use of them,) favoured a momen-

tary resolution, and she hastily scribbled, as if fearful of herself, the following lines:

“ My beloved Woodvile,

“ Yes, *beloved*; I have involuntarily written the word, and I will not be such a prude as to wash it out, even with my tears; for dear indeed I must confess that you long have been to me; and yet I am even now but ill recovered from the agitations your letter has caused me. I will not dwell on the many particulars there, in which your partial imagination too often bestows flattery on me, of which I am totally undeserving. I will confess that the happiness of Woodvile is of all earthy wishes nearest my heart. But my melancholy fancy anticipates clouds of evil in the opposition of my mother. For her sake I would cheerfully resign all *my own* hopes of happiness in this world. But if her commands should unfortunately interfere with the serious comfort of Woodvile, oh Heaven protect me from the trial! This has been written in such agitation that I could scarce breathe, and with an hand so trembling

trembling, that I must hasten to subscribe myself scarce legibly, yet indeed, very, very truly yours,

Mary De-Clifford."

She was so doubtful of her own resolution, that she hastened to fold and wafer this scrawl, and deposit it in her little pocket-book for the first opportunity of delivery. A scrawl indeed it was, and by no means equal to the fancy and tenderness of Mary, but the case was, that in the extreme perturbations of her mind she did not possess her faculties; and unaffected, and totally free from all vanity of her own abilities, as she was, she was careless of every thing but the explanation of her sentiments to Woodvile, whom she could not bear the idea of torturing with suspense.

She felt herself relieved by this exertion. The morning was bright and sharp; she opened her window to revive herself with the freshness of the early air, and stood gazing for some moments on the park before her,

her, where the sun was dissipating the white frosts, that spangled the ground, and the cattle were eagerly browsing on the dewy grass. She then thought she heard footsteps on the gravel beneath her, and putting her head farther out of the window, saw immediately under it the figure of Woodvile, whose eyes instantly caught hers; and whose voice saluting her spoke the delight he felt at the interview. She smiled at him in sweet confusion almost through tears, and taking out her pocket-book dropt into his hands the fated letter. With a countenance of joy he bowed his thanks, and retired with an eager curiosity to open it.

Mary now sat down in her room to enjoy for a little while her own thoughts. Her agitations began to subside, and though she still felt a degree of alarm through her frame, her feelings altogether were those of more tender and exquisite happiness than she had ever before experienced. The idea of being pleasing to Woodvile was the most luxurious of all ideas to her; and the opportunity of contributing

contributing to his happiness seemed yet a bliss too heavenly ever to befall her. Again for a moment it appeared to be but a dream; the images before her were too delightful to be real. But soon the ring of the breakfast-bell roused her from her musings; and the reflection that she must now enter the room with Woodvile, between whom such a serious, such an awful interchange of vows, had passed, though it reminded her of the reality, overwhelmed her with such terrors as almost for the moment suspended all her powers. As she began to recover herself, she grew sick at the thought of the solemn things that had passed, and almost wished the whole undone again. However at last with a most palpitating heart, eyes that scarce saw, and legs that trembled so under her they seemed hardly able to support her, she descended the stair-case, when on opening the door the first figure which met her eyes at the breakfast-table was that of Sir Peter Lumm. This added to her confusion; she now walked up the room without being able to distinguish another object; and sat down in the first chair
she

she could meet with. Woodvile happened to be sitting nearly behind it, but perceiving her extreme distress, he purposely for some moments avoided attracting her notice, till as she accidentally put her hand on some occasion behind her, he seized it unperceived by the company, and pressed it so, that looking round, her eyes instantly met his, and such an expression rose in the countenance of both at once, that there seemed an interchange of their very inmost hearts. Mrs. De-Clifford, always on the watch, caught their looks, and understood too much of them. Sir Peter Lumm, though jealous of the presence of Woodvile, was not such a nice observer. Secure of the support of the mother he seemed on the whole well satisfied with himself; yet the cold looks and answers of Mary would have depressed a man of moderate sensibility. These she could not suppress, notwithstanding the flashes of anger, that darted from her mother's eyes, and even the expressions of revenge, which lighted up in her countenance, and which Woodvile could not avoid, with excessive
grief

grief perceiving. The internal feelings of the lovers seemed yet so to impress them, that they the less regarded the storm that appeared likely to burst over their heads. De-Clifford was perplexed how to act between his mother on the one hand, and his beloved sister, and dear friend on the other. And even Fitzherbert, the friendly and noble-minded Fitzherbert, (who had formed an extraordinary opinion of Woodvile as well as Mary,) pitied the lovers, and hated the dull low wretch, whose presence and whose persecuting suit seemed to interrupt their happiness.

The breakfast table was soon removed, and De-Clifford soon left the room, and was almost instantly followed by Sir Peter Lumm, as if by appointment. Mary turned pale, as if she presaged mischief, and Woodvile and De-Clifford both in a moment caught her expression. "What is the matter Mary!" said her brother.—"Nothing at all, indeed
"nothing, dear brother," replied she with a smile. But she soon rose, and pretended
for

for some moments to look out of the window, to conceal her uneasiness, and thence after a short time stole out of the room. She ran up stairs to indulge her fears without restraint in her own room, and was about to pass through her mother's dressing room, which as the door stood half-open she supposed to be empty, when she had scarce set her foot in it before her hand was seized by Sir Peter Lumm, who had stood behind the door. "My dearest Miss De-Clifford" cried he, "I am happy to have this opportunity of speaking to you alone about—" "whatever it may be about Sir," interrupted she almost breathless, and attempting to withdraw her hand, "I must beg to be excused." She then again attempted to extricate herself. "No, Miss De-Clifford," said he triumphantly "I cannot so easily give up my captive." "Captive, Sir," more angrily, and again struggling, "Let me go, Sir, this instant or——" "you will call Woodvile to run me through the body," (in an insolent voice,) "is that what you was going to say?"
But

But I will be even with him!" (through his shut teeth). She made another effort to get away from him, but finding her own weakness, burst into tears. "What is the matter, Miss De-Clifford," said he in a softer tone, but impudently putting his arm round her waist, and holding her still faster, "I would not for the world be the cause of those tears!" "Then let me go, Sir!" she again cried out in agony. "Any thing but that;" said he, "you must hear me first: you know the affection I have for you, and as a proof of it I am come to lay my life, my fortune, my every thing at your feet:" (unable to get free, she turned her blue eyes at him in speechless horror,)—"look not angry, Miss De-Clifford, my estate, my rank, and I may venture to say my other qualifications are not, cannot be despicable: your mother sanctions my wishes: hear me then, dearest girl!" lifting her struggling hand to his lips, and as he grew bolder with the nearer approach to her most delicate and beautiful person, straining her agonized frame closer

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to

to him to steal a kiss, "hear me," he repeated—"hear you, base unmanly wretch!" interrupted she, in a dying voice, at that instant making one more effort with her utmost strength, and then shrieking as the last words faltered on her tongue, fainted in his arms. Sir Peter was truly frightened, (for he really loved Mary as much as it was possible for him to love any being but himself;) he no longer gazed lawlessly on the beautiful and angelic figure that was clasped lifeless in his arms, but with mingled pity and affection chafed her temples, and watched her returning breath. Mrs. De-Clifford, who had heard her shriek, though not very distinctly, came into the room, and found him in this situation; knowing however privately the state of her daughter's heart, and supposing this to be merely the consequence of an interesting conversation, which she had expected to take place, she made no comments, but assisted in lifting her daughter to a chair, and in using the means of reviving her. When she at length opened her eyes, and saw the figure of Sir Peter before her, she

she again gave a faint shriek, and was near relapsing, but at the voice of her mother, revived and burst into tears. Mrs. De-Clifford took her hand, and kissed it, and enquired in a tender voice how she was, on which she hid her face in her mother's bosom, and sobbed aloud. Sir Peter turned pale, and trembled, and attempted three or four times to speak, but found himself unable to articulate. "Sir Peter" said Mrs. De-Clifford, yet not angrily, "I think you had better leave us at present; you will find the gentlemen below." He accordingly retired. "My dear child," said she, as soon as he was gone; "what has been the matter?" Mary sighed, and could not speak. "I do not wonder my love," continued her mother "that the subject on which Sir Peter Lumm has probably been talking to you, (for he had already informed me of his intention,) has affected you, since it is certainly a very serious and awful one!" — "Serious indeed" sighed Mary. "Well, but my love, you cannot but be pleased with the proposals that Sir

“ Peter Lumm has probably already made
“ you: his fortune, his rank, his character
“ are all highly desirable, and whatever
“ childish prejudices you may have taken,
“ believe me, my love, you would repent
“ bitterly at a maturer age the folly of hav-
“ ing indulged, and I am sure you will not
“ consider as trifling my judgment and
“ wishes, who can have no end but your
“ happiness in view. Sir Peter——” “ O
“ my mother,” interrupted Mary with stream-
ing eyes, and clasped hands, “ O my be-
loved mother, urge me not thus tenderly
to what I cannot, indeed indeed I cannot,
must not do: you would not have me
prostitute the holy vows of the altar—
“ Sir Peter Lumm is my a ——” “ Enough,
child, I understand you—your heart is
seduced by that beggared villain, Wood-
vile, who with base art enters his friend’s
house to beguile his sister’s affections, but,
“ remember child,” (raising her enraged
voice, and rising from her chair to leave the
room,) “ remember, that woe indeed be to
the day, when —— :” ere she could ut-
ter

ter another word, Mary fell on her knees before her, and with uplifted hands, and eyes that looking in her mother's face, expressed the tenderest agony, while the tears covered her pale cheeks, amid her sobs cried out; "O dearest, dearest madam, do not curse me! leave me not thus angry, I entreat you, my beloved mother!"—for indeed my heart that cannot bear such harshness, must break!—O do not"—clasping her mother's knees in an agony, but ere she could add another word, Mrs. De-Clifford sprung from her, and knew not that she left her agonized daughter senseless on the floor.

C H A P. VII.

MR S. De-Clifford spent part of the morning between long conferences with Sir Peter Lumm and with her son ; and in an accidental interview with Woodvile, language of such a nature had been used by her, as his high spirit could not brook, and he accordingly had taken an abrupt departure for Woodlands, without being able even to catch a momentary sight of his beloved Mary, who had with difficulty recovered from the state in which her mother left her, and with trembling legs crept into her own room, where she spent the morning in tears ; but her wretchedness when, on coming down to dinner, she found not Woodvile, even though she had dreaded seeing him, cannot be

be expressed. At length having sat after dinner till the state of her mind became insupportable, she took the opportunity of following her brother, who accidentally was going out of the room, and asking him, whose tenderness to her she never doubted, what was become of his friend. "My dear Mary," said he, shaking his head, "he is gone home; I fear my mother has used him ill;" (she turned dreadfully pale, and tears came into her eyes,) "my sweet sister, I know too well the state of your heart: I cannot be angry with you for loving my friend Woodvile: yet under the circumstances it is unfortunate: my mother has taken unhappy prejudices: but what can I do?" (taking her cold hand, and kissing it,) "if I knew but how to act, there is nothing I would not attempt to make my dear Mary happy!"—"O my brother!" she faintly articulated, and clasping her arms round him, wept upon his bosom. But almost in a moment a violent ring of the eating-room bell, necessitated them to separate, and

and Mary retired to her own apartment to vent her feelings.

She spent the remainder of that, and several succeeding days, in the most acute misery, during which however she had several interesting and sometimes consolatory conversations, with her dear friend Fitzherbert, (to whom also she now began to open her heart,) and her beloved brother. She began to look very pale and ill, but her mother did not appear to relent, and she had two or three more visits from Sir Peter, who still had the meanness to urge his suit, and sometimes with mysterious confidence alluded contemptuously to Woodvile, in a manner that gave her the most poignant suffering, as well as indignation.

Woodvile meanwhile was returned to Grafton in a state of wretchedness so exquisite, as nothing less than the angelic image of Mary returning his love with tenderness, which continually came across his mind and softened his agitations, could have preserved.

preserved from phrenzy. It was well for Emily Barnard, considering the discovery he had made of her duplicity, that she had left the house. He felt some ease in opening his bosom to his sister Elinor, who from that moment became a more warm advocate for Mary, than she had ever been for Emily, whose falshood entirely changed her good opinion of her. Elinor discovered the secret to her mother, and as it passed round, all, however indignant at Mrs. De-Clifford, became anxious for the alliance. These circumstances contributed to render him more calm, and he seemed to be recovering a degree of chearfulness, when the post brought him the following letter.

Howley, Jan. 3, 1791.

“ Sir,

“ By virtue of my office as Steward to Sir Peter Lumm, I makes bold to inform your Honor, that in pursuance of Sir Peter’s order to look out some deeds for the purpose of his Worship’s intended marriage, I found several conveyances of your Honor’s estate
at

at Grafton and other parts, made by your late father to the late Sir Peter, which, on looking further into, I discovered to be mortgage deeds; and upon inspecting the accounts perceive that a very large arrear of principal and interest is now due to my master, amounting together to the sum of 15,000*l.* or thereabouts, and I hereby gives your Honor this notice, that unless the same is paid forthwith, the mortgage will be fore-closed, and the said estates seized into Sir Peter's hands.

Your Honor's

obedient servant,

John Higgins."

The contents of this letter struck a very alarming panic into the breast of Woodvile, and though he knew the mean and villainous motives, from whence it proceeded; yet remembering that his father had formerly borrowed large sums of money, of the late Sir Peter, (though he had understood they had long since been repaid, partly by the conveyance of some smaller parts of his estates, which Sir Peter still en-

enjoyed;) he could not be satisfied, till he examined with his own Steward into the affair. In the books of the latter, they found authentic entries of the settlement in his father's time of the whole affair, as he had supposed, but still no receipts for the money appeared. They therefore both supposed that the business had been settled without sufficient precaution, and that some essential deeds had been omitted to be delivered up, on which the roguery of Higgins had founded the present claim. Woodvile therefore enraged, not only at the villainy of the Steward, but at the meanness at least, with which Sir Peter had consented to time his claim, wrote instantly the following answer.

Grafton, Jan. 6, 1791.

“ Mr. Higgins,

“ I neither regard your villainy, nor your master's meanness; the former I will drag forth to public punishment; the latter I despise too much to take any further notice of:
I could

I could expect nothing else from his birth; ill-got wealth may confer rank on the person, but cannot elevate the mind.

Edmund Woodvile."

The storm that this answer caused in the proud bosom of Sir Peter Lumn, went beyond all bounds; he vowed vengeance, with infernal malice, and instantly dispatched his servant with a challenge, couched in the following pitiful words.

Hawley, Jan. 9, 1791.

"The insults contained in your letter to my Steward demand immediate satisfaction; as to your contempt, Sir, of my birth, because a barbarian Lord or two, two or three centuries ago, stands at the head of your empty pedigree, I laugh at it, Sir; that I do; I do not know what would have become of your poor proud father, had it not been for mine; and now you think to
stop

stop the just claims of return, that gratitude alone ought to have induced you to attend to, by a boast of your birth. Why you are an *Aristocrat* with a vengeance, hah! No, Sir, I have always heard that it is a greater honor to be the raiser of one's own family, than to boast of borrowed splendor. But really, Sir, my rank demands a little more attention. I repeat therefore, Sir, I must have instant reparation: name your time, place, and weapons.

Peter Lumm."

Woodvile, whose spirit was of the boldest kind, read this incoherent rhapsody of nonsense, and laughed outright. He returned an instant answer, naming the next day but one, at nine in the morning; the place, a common near Hawley; the arms, pistols. But when he began to reflect, and the soft form of Mary De-Clifford rushed across his mind again, it totally unmanned him, and he felt his whole frame yield to an overwhelming tenderness. He determined, though excluded from the house at Woodlands, to

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see

see her, if possible, once before the awful meeting; and then set himself to make the best disposition, he could in so short a time, of his worldly affairs. But it required all his fortitude to meet his mother and sisters, the sight of whom affected him so, that he could scarce keep the tears out of his eyes. The meals of that day, and the next morning, were exquisitely painful to him, when telling his mother that business called him for a few days from home, he took his leave, (scarce daring to trust his own voice,)—perhaps for ever in this world. He rode with great speed, by which he endeavoured to shake off his own reflections, towards Woodlands; and about eight in the evening, it being a bright moon-light night, arrived within the park-gate. He thence went, not without much trepidation, to the house, and placed himself under the window of Mary's bedroom at the side of the house, where he saw a light. After listening some moments, he thought he heard a tender voice like hers as if repeating to herself, and saw something like a figure at the window. He gently called
the

the name of MARY, but nobody answered. He repeated it. An affrighted voice asked, "who calls me?" "MARY!"—he repeated, with the hope she would recollect the tone. She heard the trample of his feet, and opening the window, looked out. "Mary," he cried fearfully, "it is Woodvile calls you!"—"Good Heavens!" she replied, almost breathless, "how came you here? What is the matter?"—"Do not be frightened;" added he, "I only wish to speak a few words with you."—"O Woodvile, Woodvile, do not put me to this trial! I ought not; what will my mother say?"—"For mercy's sake," (with the most earnest mournfulness,) "but a few words!"—"Indeed I cannot; I would do any thing for you almost, but I dare not!" "Mary!" (in an awefully melancholy tone,) "I may not see you again for some time; my whole peace depends upon it!"—"O Heavens, my breaking heart! How can I?"—"You used to walk by moonlight: I entreat you therefore to come!"—"Alas! Woodvile, I cannot resist!" She came down:

they strolled to some distance from the house. She trembled all over at the thought of the imprudent step she had taken. He took her hand, and mixing kisses with his tears upon it, called down a thousand blessings on her. She was too much affected to articulate a word, and her legs tottered so she was afraid of sinking, and was obliged to support herself by Woodvile's arm. "Mary, forgive
" my melancholy, but indeed you are angel
" so perfect, that I feel a presage that the
" joy of often seeing you is a happiness too
" exquisite to be allowed on earth!"—
" Dear Woodvile, pray do not talk so wildly!"—
" By all that is holy, Mary, I adore
" you a thousand times more than I can find
" language to express!"—"For Heaven's
" sake, Woodvile, spare me these distressing
" speeches!"—"O Mary, probably I may
" soon take a long journey, and I want to
" pour out the feelings of my heart to you;
" but I cannot find words!"—"Gracious
" Heaven! a long journey!"—"Yes, you
" will not forget me, Mary?" "Forget you,
" Woodvile! not till this heart ceases to
" beat,

“beat; and then, as perhaps soon it will, O
 “may it be my lot to watch over you while
 “you linger on earth!” “Mary, my angelic
 “Mary, talk not so: you will break my
 “heart with your tenderness. No! I feel a
 “monitor within me, that tells me this long-
 “worn frame will soon find a calm. But
 “you, my angel, my excellent Mary, many
 “years may you enjoy the happiness you de-
 “serve?” “O Woodvile,” (pressing his
 hand,) “my beloved Woodvile, do not
 “talk with such melancholy! you over-
 “come my feeble spirits!” “My adored
 “girl, I will, I ought to command myself:
 “but I know not what strange weight op-
 “presses my bosom! Mary, when I am gone,
 “you will not forget me, however perfe-
 “cuted my memory may be! Let me but
 “live in your heart, and I care not then
 “for the fate, that may be in store for me!”
 —“O Woodvile, what can this mean? Sure
 “some misfortune awaits you, which you
 “will not tell me. O do not, do not de-
 “ceive me! My cruel fancy anticipates a
 “thousand horrors! Put an end to my tor-

“turing suspense, I intreat you!”—“O do
“not be so alarmed, my tender Mary!”
(dropping his tears on her soft hand, as he
imprinted a fervid kiss upon it,) “no evil
“grieves me, but the dread of that intoler-
“able one, absence from you, in whose pre-
“sence alone I can exist, whose voice alone
“I can hear with pleasure! But if the ur-
“gency of my affairs should call me away
“on a long journey, still, (faithful and soft
“as you are, I must repeat it,) O cherish the
“memory of your Woodvile!”—“O do not
“continue, Woodvile, to rend this heart
“with doubts of her, whose attachment to
“you, alas, is inseparable from her existence!”

He turned his illumined eyes upon her, (the moon at that moment breaking with uncommon splendor from a cloud,) with a bursting tenderness, that could find no words, in which to vent itself: she had cast her tearful countenance upon the ground to hide the blushes that, as she uttered the last soft sentence, had tinged her pale cheeks: he clasped her in his arms, and while he felt the exquisitely beautiful and trembling frame of her, whom
he

he adored, in his embrace, almost senseless as she was with fear and tenderness, he fixed his lips on hers, and overcome with the mixture of love, of tremors, of joy, and a solemn awe that whispered him they might never meet again but in Heaven, his sight swam, his ears heard not, and he remained some time in a delirium, so violent, that his intellects were near the point of leaving him for ever. At length Mary, awaking almost as from a fainting fit, breathed out in a voice of soft reproach, "Woodvile!" and would have uttered more, but her tongue failed her. Woodvile however heard it, and lifting up his head, and unfolding his clasped arms, cried: "Mary, do I again hear that
"enchancing voice! Yes, it shall be obeyed!
"Bliss like this, is too exquisite for earth!
"We will hasten home! You shall be released, Mary!" And thus speaking, he bore her under his arm, while her tottering frame was scarce able to support her, and her feelings were too tumultuous for expression, towards the house. The moon veiled herself under a cloud, and a melancholy stillness

ness reigned over the park. They approached the hall-door. Woodvile thought every step was tearing a part of his soul from him. He took her sweet hand again, and bore it to his lips: he held it against his heart, “Feel “Mary,” he cried; “how my heart beats, “but perhaps——” his voice was drowned in his tears. The moon shone out again; her little bosom beat dreadfully, and her countenance was the very soul of woe: he again kissed her pale lips: and then cried: “Adieu, my most beloved Mary! Angels “must guard such perfection as yours! But “O let the prayers of that pure and heavenly heart be offered up for me! And “may blessings without end attend you!”— He wrung her hand, and hastened away, while her eyes in agony pursued him, and he scarce heard her faltering tongue cry: “Blessings on him! Day and night will I “pray for my adored Woodvile!”

A night of intolerable anguish did he pass at an Inn about four miles off, while Mary’s feelings, though by no means so full of despair,

spair, were, however softened by moments of luxurious reflection, altogether agitated and wretched.

About seven o'clock the next morning, Fitzherbert was waked by his servant with a letter in his hand, which on opening he found to be from Woodvile, stating his appointed meeting with Sir Peter Lumm, and requesting from the necessity of the case the favor of his attending him to the field. Fitzherbert though in much concern, and for some moments in doubt whether he ought not to let De-Clifford into the secret, yet as no time was to be lost, determined on the whole to save him the distress of such a communication. As soon therefore as he was dressed, he set off for the Inn, whence Woodvile's note was dated, and found him there, exceedingly calm and dauntless as to his meeting with Sir Peter, but evidently distracted almost to madness, whenever the idea of Mary De-Clifford was brought before his mind.

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They soon arrived at the appointed Common. Sir Peter Lumm and his friend were not behind; the countenance of the former expressing revenge, though by no means mixed with fear. Woodvile looked calm, yet solemn; fully sensible of the awful crisis, yet undaunted; treating his adversary with a collected pity, which at once united contempt and forgiveness. The preliminaries settled, the dreadful moment came. They both fired together: Sir Peter was wounded in the arm: but Woodvile—alas! the amiable and inspired Woodvile, was shot through the heart, and turning a countenance of inexpressible anguish on Fitzherbert, he half uttered the beloved name of *Mary*, but could no more—and his mighty soul fled to a place, for which it was better fitted. I cannot attempt to describe the remainder of this affecting scene. To those who feel as I do, the recital would be too terrible to give pleasure. I will just add that Fitzherbert, whose agony was too bitter almost to bear, sent for De-Clifford, and that the two friends together had him conveyed to the neighbouring

bouring Inn from whence he came; and thence, (as soon as the dreadful business could be broke to his family,) to Grafton, where his melancholy corps was placed in repose amongst his ancestors; and surely since the first rise of that illustrious family, none more amiable, none who deserved an higher fame were ever placed in that awful receptacle. Thus by this barbarous custom of duelling, whereby the fool and the wise, the good and the bad are placed upon a footing, was extinguished the male line of the truly noble family of Woodvile. Grief in six months brought to the grave his excellent mother. And I know not that his sweet sister Elinor will ever recover her health or spirits.

Sir Peter Lumm was conveyed to his own house, and after his wound was dressed, fled for the Continent, where he still remains an unhappy exile.

But as to the family at Woodlands, the grief it has caused there is such, as can afford no hope of comfort in this world. From
Mary

Mary the matter was some time concealed. George De-Clifford, after performing the last kind offices for his friend, sunk into a melancholy, from whence it is not expected he will ever recover. Mrs. De-Clifford, conscious of the part herself had acted, gave way, when out of the presence of Mary, to the deepest affliction. Mary meanwhile had already suffered too much in her feelings and her tender frame, having caught a violent cold from the last moonlight interview. A slight fever had for some days confined her to her room, which had enabled them to conceal the fatal event thus long from her. During this time her dreams had been wild and distracted, and the musings of the day full of melancholy presages.

At last the general noise this event had made over the country, and the lamentations it brought forth in all the public prints, and all private conversations, (for now that poor Woodvile was gone,) even those who envied and hated him before, saw his virtues and his talents, which “brightened as they took
“their

“their flight,”) together with the continual questions that sweet Mary was putting to her brother regarding him, at a time his own affliction was by far too overpowering to enable him, even for her sake, at all times to evade them, made it necessary to open the dreadful secret to her. This affecting task fell upon Mrs. De-Clifford: she did it with all the tenderness, and all the exertion she could command: but they were all vain: the narration was too much for the heart of Mary: she instantly fainted, and thence fell into fits, which were succeeded by a delirious fever, from whence she never sufficiently recovered to possess her intellects. For more than a week her life was not expected from hour to hour; at length the fever gradually subsided, and she seemed to grow much better. But the ramblings of her mind were exquisitely dreadful: she called on the name of Woodvile; she talked to him; she uttered such divine tenderness regarding him; she wrote such heavenly verses, yet so wild; that no persons who had the least touch of sensibility, could bear to hear her, with-

X

out:

out having their hearts almost broken. During this time her person, which generally wore the expression of an inspired melancholy, but was now and then dressed up with a wild gaiety, was often more beautiful even than before. Fitzherbert, whose fancy seemed, (from the horror of having been a party in the tragical event, and the grief at Mary's situation,) to be also not a little deranged, having always admired her as the most perfect of human beings, now appeared to increase in his adoration, and enjoyed nothing so much as talking and weeping with her. But they were not suffered to be much together, for it seemed to make both worse.

All De-Clifford's friends, particularly Hungerford, Bromley, Taylor, and Berney, who had spent the last autumn at Woodlands, were unusually affected with this horrid misfortune. They all came continually to enquire after Mary, but no one of them, tho' all determined to undergo it, could support the shock of an interview. It left such unmingled sadness upon their imagination, as their lives probably will not wear out.

Her

Her brother, whose mental malady seemed to increase, being now not permitted to see her, as the meeting was too overcoming to both, was sent abroad in the spring, where he yet remains, with little hope I fear of recovering cheerfulness.

As to myself, to whom she appeared a being infinitely more beautiful both in person, and mind, than I ever expected to have seen on earth, and to whom Woodvile was a friend so congenial, so exquisitely beloved, that nothing in this world can repair his loss; I watched her affliction, and often joined in her tears during the recess of the last autumnal months, (a period of the year during which my imagination too frequently predominates over my mind) with a melancholy interest, which absorbed my own woes, till on the 30th of last October, worn out as her delicate frame was by the repeated exertions of her wild fancy, that angelic soul burst its confines, and fled to eternity, leaving me to soothe my grief by telling her mournful story.

F I N I S.

Her brother, whose mind was
 ed to increase, being now not permitted to
 the sea, as the mother was too weak
 to both, was left alone in the room, with
 her remaining with this hope that of re-
 covering consciousness.

As to my own life, I have not a word to say.

PRINCIPAL ERRATA.

- P. 8. l. 8, 9, for "was one of the" read "were the"
 P. 41. l. 1. insert a semicolon after "concert"
 P. 43. l. 12. between "though" and "had" insert
 "she"
 P. 96. l. 8. for "frein" read "frieu"
 P. 97. l. 4. for "thrills" read "fills"
 P. 195. l. 3. for "to penedo" read "opened to"



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